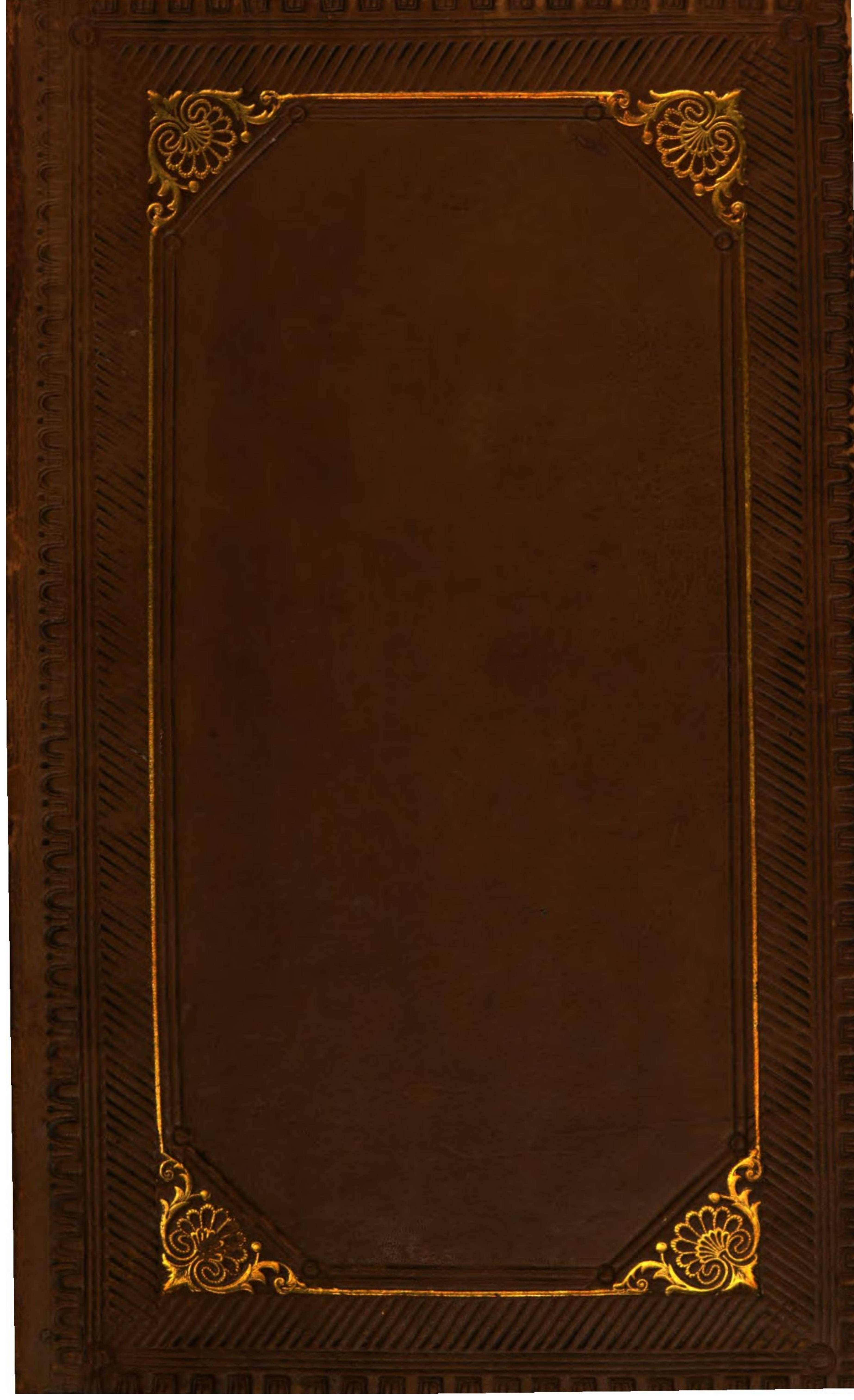
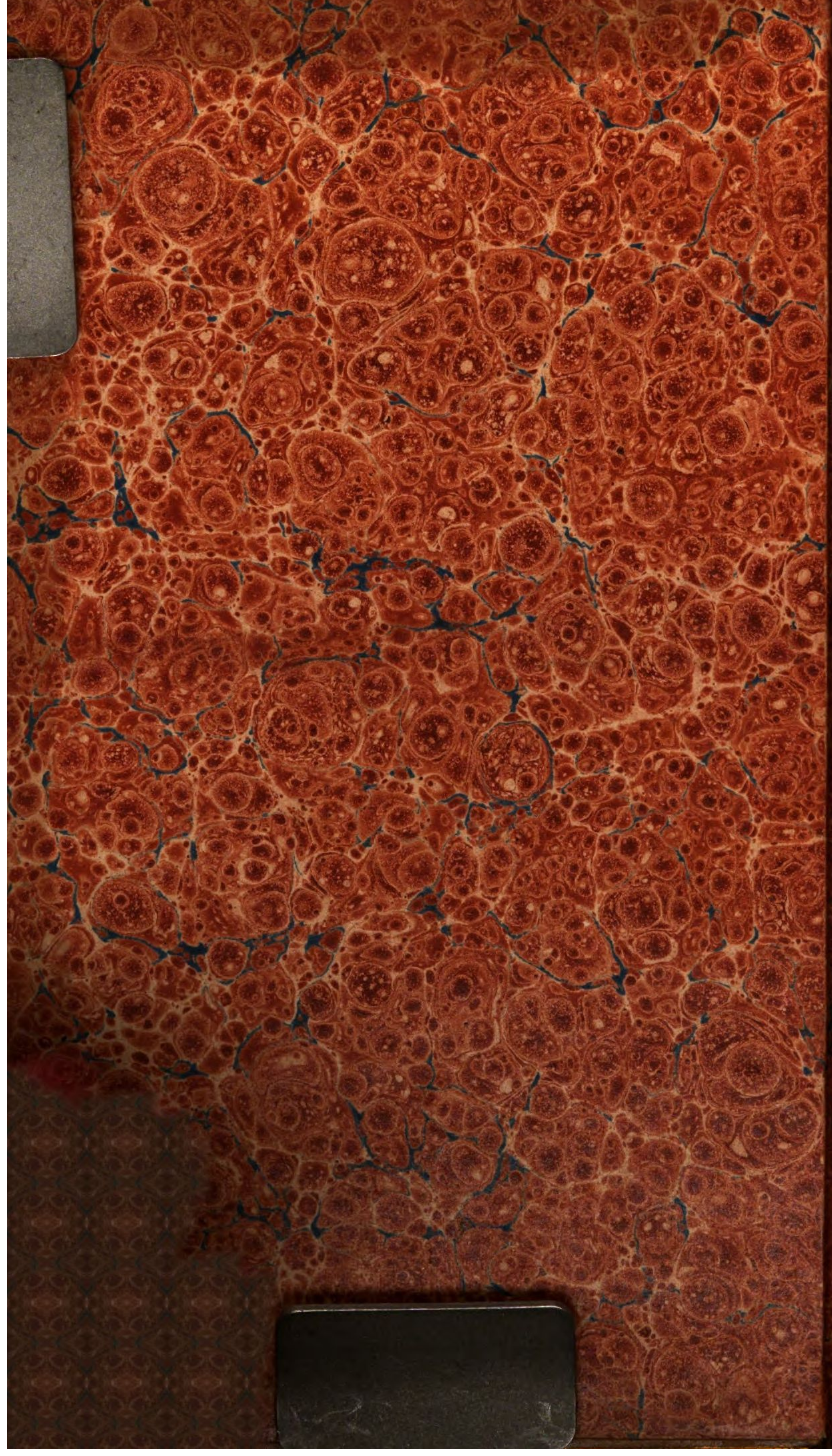






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SKETCHES

PERSIA,

JOURNALS OF A TRAVELLER IN THE EAST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1845.

S K E T C H E S

OF

P E R S I A,

FROM THE

JOURNALS OF A TRAVELLER IN THE EAST.

Sir John Malcolm

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXVIII.

WB172166



LONDON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

THESE VOLUMES

ARE INSCRIBED

TO

JOHN FLEMING, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., &c.

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE MEDICAL BOARD OF CALCUTTA,

BY

HIS MOST SINCERE AND ATTACHED FRIEND,

THE TRAVELLER.

THE TRAVELLER

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THE TRAVELLER

INTRODUCTION.

ONCE upon a time this Island of Great Britain had some spots where men and women and little children dwelt, or were believed to dwell, in innocence, ignorance, and content. Travellers seldom visited them; poets saw them in their dreams, and novelists told stories of them; but these days are now past. Thanks to steam-boats and stage-coaches, there is not a spot to which an ignorant or sage human being can retire, where his eye will not be delighted or offended by a dark column of smoke, or his ear gratified or grated by the rattling wheels of a carriage. It is perhaps a consequence of this invasion of retirement that all are tempted from their homes, and that while one half of the population is on the highways

the other half is on the narrow seas. This love of travel, however, is in the vast majority limited to the neighbouring countries of Europe; but the ardour of curiosity, and an ambitious desire of escaping from the beaten track, has of late years induced not a few scientific and enterprising travellers to overrun the renowned lands of Greece and Egypt, whose inhabitants stare with astonishment at men flying with impatience from town to town, exploring ruins; measuring pyramids; groping in dark caverns; analyzing the various properties of earth, air, and water; carrying off mutilated gods and goddesses; packing up common stones and pebbles, as if they were rubies and diamonds; and even bearing away the carcasses of the dead, strangely preferring the withered frame of a female mummy, which has been mouldering for four thousand years in its sepulchre, to the loveliest specimens of living and animated beauty.

The uninformed natives of these countries, whose condition is much to be deplored, are not aware that the great Samuel Johnson has said, that “Whatever raises the past, the distant, and the future, above the present, exalts us in the dignity of human beings;” which is an unanswerably good reason for the preference given to mummies over every living object, however fascinating.

The rage of the present day for mummies and other delectable reliques of antiquity has deluged Egypt with itinerant men of science and research, who have quite exhausted that land of wonders; and those who have lately visited it have been reduced, from actual want of other aliment, to the necessity of preying upon their predecessors, many of whom have been cruelly mangled, and some wholly devoured.

These wandering tribes of writers, who are, in a certain degree, subject to the same motives

which force the hordes of Tartary to change their places of abode, have recently begun to migrate into Syria, Asia Minor, and some have actually penetrated as far as Persia. This has given me no small alarm, for I have long had designs upon that country myself: I had seen something of it, and had indulged a hope that I might, at my leisure, gratify the public by allowing them to participate in my stock of information; but being of an indolent disposition I deferred the execution of this, my favourite plan, until that anticipated period of repose, the prospect of which, however distant, has always cheered a life of vicissitude and labour.

Nothing that had hitherto appeared respecting Persia at all frightened me. I am no historian, therefore I did not tremble at Sir John Malcolm's ponderous quartos; I am no tourist, Mr. Morier's Journeys gave me no uneasiness; the learned Researches of Sir William Ouseley were enough to terrify an antiquarian,

but that was not my trade; and, as I happen to have clumsy, untaught fingers, and little if any taste for the picturesque, I viewed, without alarm, the splendid volumes of Sir Robert Ker Porter. Far different, however, was the case when that rogue Hajji Baba made his appearance. I perused him with anxiety, but was consoled by finding that, though he approached the very borders of my province, he had made no serious inroads. I was roused, however, into action, and determined instantly to rummage those trunks into which my sketches had been thrown as they were finished, and where many of them had slumbered undisturbed for nearly thirty years.

I must warn the reader that the trunks here spoken of bear no resemblance whatever to those imaginary boxes which it has lately been the fashion to discover, filled with MSS., unaccountably deposited in them by some strange and mysterious wight; mine are all real, well-

made, strong, iron-clamped boxes, which I had prepared with great care, in order that they might preserve the papers I from time to time intrusted to them. I am well aware that this plain and true statement of the fact will, with many, diminish the interest of these pages; but with others it will increase it; for they will be gratified to find in them sketches taken on the spot, while the facts and the feelings to which they relate were fresh and warm before me; and I can truly affirm, that the sense, the nonsense, the anecdotes, the fables, and the tales,—all, in short, which these volumes contain, with the exception of a few sage reflections of my own, do actually belong to the good people amongst whom they profess to have been collected.

Yet partial as I was to my secret hoard, it was long before I could make up my mind to publish. While I was one day musing upon the subject, my attention was accidentally

drawn to a volume of Persian poetry that was lying on the table. A fâl or lot, I exclaimed, shall put an end to my indecision! Saying which, according to the usage of my Persian friends in like cases, I shut my eyes, opened the book, and counting seven pages back, read the first four lines, as follows:

“ Her kih sefer kerdeh pesendeedeh sheved
Z’âeena-e-noor kemâl-esh deedeh sheved
Pâkeezeter ez âb nebâshed cheezee
Her jâh kih kooned mekâm gendeedeh sheved.”

“ Whoever has travelled shall be approved;
His perfections shall be reflected as from a mirror of
light.
There can be nothing more pure than water;
But wherever it stagnates it becomes offensive.”

My delight was excessive, and I despatched my manuscripts forthwith to the bookseller; who has been desired to keep me minutely in-

formed of the success of these volumes; and a hint has been given him, that if they meet with encouragement, the contents of the boxes before mentioned are far from being exhausted.

NOTE TO THE READER.

The usual orthography of some proper names has been altered, with a view of rendering them more conformable to the pronunciation and the grammar of the languages to which they belong. For instance, our old friend and favourite, the caliph Haroun-al-Raschid of the Arabian Tales, appears under his Arabic name of Haroon-oor-Rasheed. The critical reader will also discover that a few of the eastern words have not always been spelled exactly alike. This unintentional typographical inaccuracy was caused by the peculiar circumstances under which these volumes were printed.

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SKETCHES OF PERSIA.

CHAPTER I.

VOYAGE FROM BOMBAY TO THE PERSIAN GULF.

THERE is a monotony in a long sea-voyage, particularly to passengers, which those who have never traversed the wide ocean cannot well understand. A fair or contrary wind, a calm or a storm, a man overboard, a strange sail, or the hooking of a shark, are events which rouse for the moment ; but the passenger soon sinks again into his listless, restless life, sitting half an hour below, walking another half hour on deck, holding on by the rigging when the ship rolls, looking over the gangway when the sea is smooth, watching the man casting the log, and waiting with anxiety to hear the latitude announced at twelve o'clock. His little incidents are, being in the way of the officer of the watch when upon deck, and when below disturbing the captain's calculations of the longitude, by laughing

or talking with other idlers ; for that is the class in which he is registered in the muster-roll of the crew. With me, however, there is a pursuit which helps to beguile a long voyage. I am always on the look-out for odd characters, and these abound at sea ; from which circumstance, I suppose, we have our common phrase of calling an out-of-the-way person “an odd fish,” alluding to the element where he is generally found. Such a one I met on board the frigate in which we sailed for Persia, and I shall give a sketch of him as taken at the moment.

This man, whose name was Peterson, was what he appeared to be, a blunt sailor : his experience in the Indian seas recommended him to the situation he now occupied, as acting master of a frigate : he was a figure to play Falstaff, being very stout, and nearly six feet high. He wore his clothes loose, and, when he came on board, a sailor, struck with his appearance, turning his quid as he eyed him, exclaimed “We shall never be in distress for canvas ; our new master wears a spare set of sails.”

I shall give Peterson’s history in his own words, as related after dinner the day he came on board. “I have been,” said he, “thirty-

two years at sea, and have seen both calms and storms. When a young man, I was stuck full of arrows by some savage Americans; and but for a tobacco-box, which stopped one that hit upon a vital part, I should have gone to Davy's locker at that time. Since I came to this country, twenty-eight years ago, I have had many ups and down, but weathered them all pretty tolerably till three years since, when coming to Bombay in a small sloop, I was laid on board by some pirates belonging to Bate*. We fought as well as we could, but the rascals were too many for us, and while we were defending one part of the vessel they sprung on board at another, giving a fire at the same time, which killed my owner close beside me. A passenger then jumped overboard, for which, thought I, 'you are a fool;' for let the worst come to the worst, a man may do that at any time. One of these fellows looking at me cried 'Mar haramee,' which means, 'kill the rascal.' 'Mut mar,' 'don't kill him,' said a soft-hearted looking fellow, and defended me from the blow; so they did not kill me, but stripped and bound

* The island of Bate is situated at the north-western extremity of the Gulf of Cutch.

me to the capstan, and away they took us to Bate. When we came there, the chief or head fellow came on board, and I fully expected we should be sent ashore and hanged. When this chap sent for me, I was a pretty figure ; I had not been shaved for three weeks, and I was wrapped round with a top-gallant studding sail. ‘What are you?’ said the fellow. ‘An Englishman,’ said I. ‘Very well ; I won’t kill you.’ ‘Faith,’ thinks I, ‘I’m very glad of that.’ ‘My people,’ says he, ‘are all big thieves.’ ‘Egad,’ thinks I, ‘you are the biggest of the gang.’ He then asked me what money or property I had ; and I thought at one time he looked as if he would have given it back ; so I tells him all, even to my gold watch. The whole was about five thousand rupees. ‘Well, well,’ says he, ‘it shall be taken care of ;’ and I suppose it was, for I never saw a rap of it, only five rupees that the villain gave me, in a present, as he called it, to bear my expenses when he sent me and my crew to Bombay.

“ I left Bate, notwithstanding my losses, as happy as could be, to get out of their clutches alive ; and after some days we reached Bombay in a pretty pickle ; my feet were swelled, I had

not shaved since my capture, and I had only a few ragged clothes on. Two rupees were left out of the five, and with them I went to a tavern and ordered breakfast; when it was over I told one of the servants to call his master. In came an English waiter, with his head all powdered, shuffling and mincing, saying, as he entered the room, 'Do you want me, sir?' 'Yes,' says I, 'I want you: I have been plundered, and have got no cash, and will thank you to lend me twenty or thirty rupees.' 'What are you—a common sailor?' 'Not quite,' says I; 'but I want the money to get a few clothes, and then I can go to my friends.' 'I am not master of this house,' said this gentleman, and out he skips. I saw no more of him or his twenty rupees; and when I told a servant to get me a tiffin, he said, I had not paid for my breakfast. As I was jawing with this fellow, a Parsee* came in, and asked me if I had not better go to the bazar, and borrow some clothes, and then

* Parsee is the name of the descendants of the ancient Persians, who still retain the usages and religion of their forefathers. There are many of these followers of Zoroaster at Bombay, where they form, if not the most numerous, the most respectable part of the native community.

go to my friends. Well, God knows, I had not much heart to do any thing ; for the unkindness of my countryman, after all I had suffered, cut me just as if I had been cut with a knife ; but I thought I might as well follow the Parsee, who was one of those fellows that go about Bombay trying what they can make of every body they meet. I goes first to one shop, and tries things on ; and when they fit, I says, ‘ I will pay you to-morrow ; ’ but the fellow says, ‘ No ; ready money.’ Well, I was obliged to strip again : this happened at four shops, and I was quite tired, when a good fellow, who keeps No. 18, of the Great Bazar, said I might fit myself, and pay when I could. I then got rigged, and stood away for Mr. Adamson, whom I had before known. I met him at the door of his house, and he did not know me ; but when I told him my story—‘ Oh ! ’ says he, quite pitiful, ‘ are you the poor fellow who has suffered so much ? I will get you a birth in another ship—and take this.’ So saying, he gives me one hundred rupees. Well, I thanked him ; and next goes to Captain Phillips, and got from him a present of two gold mohurs, and six suits of good clothes, from top to toe. He made me

report and write three or four sheets about Bate, and how I had been used; and then sent me to the governor, Mr. Duncan, who gets all the long story from me again, and then gave me one hundred rupees. I had now two hundred and thirty rupees and clean rigging. I goes again to the tavern, and sings out lustily for tiffin. Well, they look and sees I am quite a different thing from before, and so become mighty civil and attentive. The waiter begs my pardon—says he was mistaken—and that he had twenty rupees ready, and would give me any aid I liked. ‘D—n your aid,’ says I; ‘you are very ready to give it to any person who does not want it.’ It was a great treat to me to serve him as I did: I eat my tiffin, paid for it on the table, and left the house.

“Well,” said Peterson, “to make a long story short, I went in a China ship, and, last year, got the command of a vessel belonging to a Persian merchant, who trades to the Gulf. He was a bad owner, had no credit, and, what with that and the fear of the Arabs, I had a troublesome time of it. We parted; and he has got another captain, rather black to be sure, but he likes him all the better, I suppose, from being nearer

his own vile colour than I was ; and I, by this means, being along shore, having no money or credit, am glad to come as acting-master of this here ship. I thank God I have good health, and don't complain ; many are worse off than I am."

Such was our Master's* history. In a conversation I had with him, as we were walking the deck, the day we arrived at Muscat, I asked him if he had a wife ? " No ;" said he. " You were never married, then ?" " I didn't say so," he replied. " I beg your pardon," said I. " Oh ! no harm, no harm ! the honest truth never need be hid : I was married ; but taking a long voyage, being away seven years, and my letters (of which, by the by, I wrote but few) miscarrying, what does my wife do, but marries again. This I heard when I got home to England." " And what did you do ?" said I ; " did you inquire after her ?" " Indeed I did not," said Peterson with great indifference ; " I didn't think her worth so much trouble ; she was glad, I suppose,

* This old sailor is now no more. He continued unlucky till he found a generous patron at Bombay, whose active benevolence gave repose and comfort to his latter days.

to get rid of me, and, God knows, I was not sorry to be shot of her."

The vicissitudes to which sailors are subject train them to bear what are termed the ups and downs of life better than any other men in the world. They appear, when afloat, not only to leave all their cares on shore, but to forget the hardships incident to their condition. A remarkable instance of this was given by our captain, who told us, that he went one day to see a tender, on board which there was a great number of men who had just been pressed, and who, though strictly confined in their floating prison, were, nevertheless, joining in the chorus of one of our patriotic airs, and singing with great glee the old song—

"Who are so free as we sons of the waves?"

CHAPTER II.

MUSCAT.

“LAND from the mast-head!” “What does it look like?” “High land, sir, on the lar-board bow, stretching away to the north-west.” “Can you see land to starboard?” “No.” “Then,” says the captain, with some little swell, “we have just hit it; the watch is a good one; and three or four hours of this will bring us into Muscat.” The prediction proved correct. Now, if I understood perspective and retrospective, how I would delight my readers by contrasting the barren rocky hills of Arabia, where not a trace of vegetable nature is to be found, with the shaded shores of Ceylon, and the dark forests that clothe the lofty mountains of Malabar! But I am not a picturesque traveller; suffice it therefore to say, the arid hills we were now contemplating protect, by almost encircling it, a cove, at the extremity of which is a small plain, crowded with high houses, which form the city of Muscat. This emporium to the trade of the Persian Gulf is defended by

batteries, which command its narrow entrance, as well as by fortifications that cover every part of the uneven and mis-shapen hills and crags around it.

Muscat is governed by a prince whose title is Imam, and whose authority, like that of many chiefs in Arabia, is more of a patriarchal than despotic character. Though he has large fleets, including some fine frigates, and a considerable army to garrison his possessions on the coast of Africa, the shores of Arabia, and the islands of the Persian Gulf, he must attend to the summons of any inhabitant of Muscat who calls him to a court of justice. Your sceptics who deny the existence of any just administration of power, except in the commonwealth of Europe, may call this a mere form. Be it so : yet the knowledge that such a form was observed went far, in my mind, to mark the character of this petty government. But it is the eye, the disposition, and the judgment of the observer, more than what is actually seen, that stamps the condition of distant nations with those who have to form their opinions at second-hand ; and the generality of readers, who have their happiness grounded on a natural prejudice in favour of

their own ways and usages, lean toward such as minister to their pride and patriotism, by throwing a dark shade on all they meet different from old England, or some of those countries in its vicinity, for which their good climate, cheap viands, and well flavoured wines, have created a predilection.

The eastern hemisphere continues to have a certain venerable air with old men from a belief that the star of knowledge first enlightened its horizon: children delight in it from its containing the enchanting tales of the “Thousand and one Nights;” ladies admire its flowered muslins, rich shawls, pure pearls, and brilliant diamonds; merchants view it as a source of commercial wealth; the naturalist, the botanist, and the geologist, search its plains, its forests, and its mountains, for unicorns, spikenard, splendid specimens of zeolite, and grand basaltic formations; the English soldier looks to its fields for a harvest of reputation; while pious missionaries sally forth with more than military zeal, to reclaim the millions of the East from their errors, and direct them in the path of life.

Almost all these, however different their ob-

jects, concur in one sentiment, that the rulers of the East are despots, and their subjects slaves ; that the former are cruel, the latter degraded and miserable, and both equally ignorant.

I had seen the father of the present Imam of Muscat when I accompanied a former mission to Persia ; we had been introduced to him on board the Ganjava, his flag ship, of a thousand tons burthen, and carrying forty guns. We found him, though surrounded with some state, very simply attired ; he had a shawl rolled round his head as a turban, and the Arab cloak, which hung over his plain robes, was of white broadcloth, no way ornamented ; he wore no jewels, and had no arms, not even a dagger, about his person ; his manner was plain and manly, and marked his active enterprising character. The eyes of his crew (Arabs, Nubians, and Abyssinians), who were upon or near the quarter-deck, though they wandered now and then among his visitors, were usually fixed on their prince ; but their countenances indicated affection, not fear ; and I could not but observe that he never looked at or spoke to any of them but with kindness.

During this visit, while we were sitting under

the awning spread over the deck, several captains of his largest vessels, who had just arrived from Bussorah, came on board. The Imam was in the cabin with the Envoy, and before he came out, I was pleased to see the hearty manner in which these commanders saluted and were received by almost all on board. “*Salâm alicum !*” (peace be with you !) was heard from all, while every one who met a friend took his right hand, and, after shaking it, raised it as high as his breast. What appeared singular, was the extent of this cordial and familiar greeting ; it was not limited by those rules which are found necessary in more civilised societies. The Arab sailor, however low his occupation, exhibited an ease and independence in addressing the commanders, which showed that, as far as the intercourse between man and man was concerned, he deemed himself his equal. I asked a person sitting near me, if this familiarity did not now and then interfere with discipline ? “*No,*” he answered ; “the line is well understood, and in cases of deviation there is a severe punishment ; for with us Arabs the right of addressing our superiors, as you have now seen, is our proudest privilege, and its loss, which

would be the consequence of the abuse of it, would be deeply felt, both as a privation and a disgrace."

The above scene was interrupted by the opening of the cabin door, and every one fell into his place as the Imam came upon deck. He stood while the commanders, who had returned from their voyage, advanced in their turns, according to their rank, and, taking his extended right hand in both theirs, pressed it, at the same time bending their bodies in a low bow, after which they raised their right hand in salutation to their head, then placing it on their heart, retired backwards. The Imam, after this ceremony was ended, seated himself, desiring us and all his principal officers to do the same.

We had a dinner prepared on board, of which the whole party partook; and when we came away, I was struck, as we passed under the stern of the vessel, by seeing some of the Imam's ladies, among whom was his favourite wife, unveiled, looking at us with eager curiosity. They appeared much pleased, which we imputed to the notice the Envoy had taken of the Imam's sons, two fine boys, each of whom was gratified with appropriate presents.

The view I had taken of the Imam's court—the intercourse we had with him, his sons, and chief officers—the security which I observed merchants and other inhabitants, both Mahomedan and Hindu, enjoying at Muscat, gave me a very pleasing impression of that place, and I had made a sketch of the manners and customs of the people, no way unfavourable. This I showed one day to a friend, who was a captain in the navy, who, rather to my surprise, burst into a fit of laughter, and said, he could show me a very opposite picture of the same scene. “There is an order from the Admiralty,” said he, “that the officers of a man-of-war, when they visit a port little known, should describe the manners and customs of the inhabitants. I have a blunt fellow of a master, an excellent seaman, but who troubles himself very little with matters on shore. Curious to have his observations, and knowing that he had two or three times visited the town of Muscat, I insisted on his complying with orders, and filling up the column of his journal. He evaded this duty as long as he could : at last, in despair, he went to his cabin, and returning with his book, said, ‘There, sir, I have obeyed orders, and you

will find all I could write about these black fellows, and all they deserve.' I took the journal and read,

‘Inhabitants of Muscat.

‘As to manners, they have none ; and their customs are very beastly.’”

This picture of the good master will no doubt be deemed by many truer than mine ; and travellers who limit their observations to the busy beach, crowded with slaves, covered with packages of dates, blackened with flies, and scented with putrid salt fish, will be certain to prefer this laconic description of this rude and dirty people ; or supposing them to enter the vile narrow streets of the town, and see (as they may) strings of slaves walking, with a man following and calling out their prices as he exhibits them in this ambulatory auction. “Number one—handsome young man, five hundred piastres ; number two—a little older, but very healthy and strong, four hundred piastres ;” and so on till he describes his whole string of unhappy bipeds. Who would not turn with indignation and disgust from such filth and abomination !

If, however, we have nerve enough to look

a little farther into the scene which has been described, we shall find that the reason why houses are crowded upon each other, till cleanliness becomes impossible, is because men and their property are protected at this port against injustice and oppression ; and our disgust at the effect will in a great degree be removed by contemplating the cause. Even with regard to the sale of slaves, of which Muscat is the great mart, though the mode of disposing of them appears to justify the master's designation of the inhabitants as "beastly in their customs," yet when we take a comparative view of the fate of the victims of this commerce, from the stain of which our own country is hardly yet purified, and which is still carried on, openly or clandestinely, by almost every power of civilised Europe, we shall be compelled to acknowledge the superior humanity of Asiatic nations.

The slave in eastern countries, after he is trained to service, attains the condition of a favoured domestic ; his adoption of the religion of his master is usually the first step which conciliates the latter. Except at a few sea-ports, he is seldom put to hard labour. In Asia there are no fields tilled by slaves, no manufactories

in which they are doomed to toil ; their occupations are all of a domestic nature, and good behaviour is rewarded by kindness and confidence, which raises them in the community to which they belong. The term gholam, or slave, in Mahomedan countries, is not one of opprobrium, nor does it even convey the idea of a degraded condition. The Georgians, Nubians, and Abyssinians, and even the Seedee, or Caffree, as the woolly-headed Africans are called, are usually married, and their children, who are termed house-born *, become, in a manner, part of their master's family. They are deemed the most attached of his adherents : they often inherit a considerable portion of his wealth ; and not unfrequently (with the exception of the woolly-headed Caffree) lose, by a marriage in his family, or by some other equally respectable connexion, all trace of their origin.

According to the Mahomedan law, the state of slavery is divided into two conditions—the perfect and absolute, or imperfect and privileged. Those who belong to the first class are, with all their property, at the disposal of their

* Khâna-zâdeh.

masters. The second, though they cannot, before emancipation, inherit or acquire property, have many privileges, and cannot be sold or transferred. A female, who has a child to her master, belongs to the privileged class ; as does a slave, to whom his master has promised his liberty, on the payment of a certain sum, or on his death.

The greatest encouragement is given in the Koran*, and by all commentaries on that volume, to the manumission of slaves. Mahomed has said, “Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument, allowing them to redeem themselves, on paying a certain sum, write one, if ye know good in them, and give them of the riches of God, which he hath given you.”

It is in obedience to this precept that pious Mahomedans often grant small pieces of land to a slave, or teach him a profession, that he may, through industry and frugality, attain the means of paying for his freedom, at the same time that he acquires habits which render him worthy of the great gift. Mahomedans are also

* Vide Sale's Koran, vol. II. p. 186.

encouraged to manumit their slaves by the law, which gives them a title, as residuary heir, to any property of which the person to whom they may have granted freedom dies possessed.

On one point the slaves in Mahomedan countries are on a footing with free females: they are only liable, for any crimes they commit, to suffer half the punishment to which a free man would be subject. This law proceeds on the ground of their not being supposed on a par, as to knowledge or social ties, with other parts of the community. The application, however, of this principle of justice to cases where the law awards death or amputation, has puzzled the wise Moullahs, or doctors, who have resorted to the usual remedy, of writing ponderous volumes upon the subject; but I do not learn that they have yet discovered a plan by which an offending woman or slave can be punished with the loss of half a life; or an operation be performed, which will leave them with a half-amputated limb.

To return to Muscat: I had visited it at all seasons; it was now winter, and the climate was pleasant; in summer the heat is intolerable. Shut out by the hills from every breeze, except

that which blows directly into the narrow entrance of the cove, there is seldom a breath of air ; and the reflection of the sun, from the bare rocks and white fortifications which overhang the town and harbour, produces a temperature, which is described by a Persian poet as giving to a panting sinner a lively anticipation of his future destiny !

The young Imam, Syed Sayed, was absent on an expedition ; but I regretted this the less, as I had seen his father, who was, in simplicity of manners, good sense, and courage, the equal of his deserving son.

Among the first who came on board, I was pleased to see my old friend, Mahomed Ghouloum. Being a good seaman, he had, on the former mission in the year 1800, acted as our pilot from Muscat to Ormus. He was now advanced to be a pilot of the state, being one of the principal ministers of the young Imam, of whose character he spoke in high praise. “ His father,” said he, “ was a brave man ; he was killed in battle ; and if his son goes on exposing himself every where, he will be killed also. He will regret much not seeing the Envoy, of whose kindness to him when a boy

he retains a grateful recollection ; for he preserves with great care the model of a seventy-four gun ship, with which he was presented by him."

Mahomed Gholoun was not changed by his prosperity, but retained all the frankness and manliness of an Arab sailor. We had many old stories, and at one, in which he was a prominent actor, he laughed very heartily. He had wished to take our vessel, the Bombay frigate, to the southward of Ormus ; but as we neared that island, the wind headed us, as the sailors call it, at the same time that it increased to a gale, and our pilot told the captain we had nothing left but to run for the harbour we desired to make, by steering between the island and the Persian shore. We did so ; the weather became worse—it blew a hurricane ; the channel, which is narrow, was missed, and we touched on a mud-bank, where the ship settled for a moment, and the waves dashed over her. The captain ordered more sail, to try and force her through the mud, exclaiming at the same time, " I would rather give a lac of rupees than lose the Company's ship." " Never mind the Company's ship," said a passenger, " so you land us

safe." The seaman in the chains kept heaving the lead, and calling "Quarter less three." "What is the use of your quarter less three," said an impatient landsman, "when the ship is aground?" "That's the captain's business, not mine," said the unconcerned Jack, and again he hove, and again he called "Quarter less three." At this moment my attention was drawn to my friend Mahomed Gholoum, who was appalled by an Irish officer's exclaiming, "I do not understand your vile lingo; but I will cut your throat (and he sawed with his finger across his windpipe to make him comprehend what he meant), I will cut your throat, you ignoramus, for drowning of gentlemen in this rascally sea."

As these scenes were passing, the press of sail which had been put upon our vessel forced her over the bank: a few minutes more saw us safe in the harbour of Ormus, and all our danger forgotten. Mahomed Gholoum, quite exhausted, had, soon after we anchored, fallen asleep on a couch in the captain's cabin; but he was dreaming of past events, and when I shook him, to make him rise to partake of supper, he started up, and with a wild look called out, "How

many fathom have you ?” We told him to take his seat, and we would teach him, Mahomedan as he was, to fathom a bowl.

Soon after our arrival at Muscat, we were visited by men of all nations and colours. I was principally attracted by the appearance and manners of some Arabs from the interior, who were brought on board by their countrymen to see an English ship of war. Their figures were light and elastic, their countenances expressed quickness and energy. The most remarkable of their features were their dark rolling eyes, which perhaps struck me more from their wandering rapidly from one object to another, glistening with wonder at all they saw. A good telescope happened to be placed so as to give a complete view of one of the farthest fortifications. I called an Arab to look through it, and he did so for about a minute, then gazed with the most eager attention at me, and, without saying a word, dashed over the ship’s side. When the boat he was in got to a little distance, he exclaimed, “ You are magicians, and I now see how you take towns ; that thing (pointing to the telescope), be they ever so far off, brings them as near as you like.” We were much

amused with his simplicity, but no arguments could prevail on him to return and receive such a lesson on optics as might dispel his delusion in supposing us to be adepts in the black art.

The Arabs at Muscat gave a luxuriant description of some beautiful valleys about twenty miles from that town; but the result of minute inquiry forced us to conclude that the green meadows and clear streams they described owed much of their value to their rarity, and that the title of Arabia the Happy is rather founded on the barrenness of the far greater part of this renowned land, than on any thing wonderful either in the climate or productions of the tract to which it is applied.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERSIAN GULF AND ABUSHEHER.

WHEN we had fairly entered the Persian Gulf, I found myself on classic ground, where all the wonderful adventures of Sinbad the sailor were, what a genuine Yankee would call, located. I sent for an Arabian servant called Khudâdâd, and asked him who were the inhabitants of the barren shore of Arabia that we saw. He answered with apparent alarm—“They are of the sect of Wahâbees, and are called Jouassimee; but God preserve us from them, for they are monsters. Their occupation is piracy, and their delight murder; and to make it worse, they give you the most pious reasons for every villany they commit. They abide by the letter of the sacred volume, rejecting all commentaries and traditions. If you are their captive, and offer all you possess to save your life, they say ‘No! it is written in the Koran, that it is unlawful to plunder the living, but we are not prohibited in that sacred work from stripping the dead;’ so saying, they

knock you on the head. But then," continued Khudâdâd, "that is not so much their fault, for they are descended from a Houl, or monster, and they act according to their nature."

I begged he would inform me about their descent. He seemed surprised at my ignorance, and said it was a story that he thought was known to every one in the world, but proceeded to comply with my request.

"An Arab fisherman," said he, "who lived in a village on the Persian Gulf, not far from Gombroon, being one day busy at his usual occupation, found his net so heavy that he could hardly drag it on shore. Exulting in his good fortune, he exerted all his strength : but judge of his astonishment, when, instead of a shoal of fish, he saw in his net an animal of the shape of a man, but covered with hair. He approached it with caution ; but finding it harmless, carried it to his house, where it soon became a favourite ; for, though it could speak no language, and utter no sound except ' houl, houl,' (from whence it took its name), it was extremely docile and intelligent ; and the fisherman, who possessed some property, employed it to guard his flocks.

“ It happened one day, that a hundred Persian horsemen, clothed in complete armour, came from the interior, and began to drive away the sheep. The Houl, who was alone, and had no arms but a club, made signs for them to desist; but they only scoffed at his unnatural appearance, till he slew one or two who approached too near him. They now attacked him in a body; but his courage and strength were surpassed by his activity, and while all fell who came within his reach, he eluded every blow of his enemies; and they fled after losing half their numbers.

“ The fisherman and his neighbours, when they heard of the battle, hastened to the aid of the faithful Houl, whom they found in possession of the horses, clothes, and arms of the vanquished Persians. An Arab of the village, struck with his valour, and casting an eye of cupidity at the wealth he had acquired, offered him the hand of his daughter, who was very beautiful, and she, preferring good qualities to outward appearance, showed no reluctance to become the bride of this kind and gallant monster. Their marriage was celebrated with more pomp than was ever before known in the village;

and the Houl, who was dressed in one of the richest suits of the Persians he had slain, and mounted on one of their finest horses, looked surprisingly well. He was quite beside himself with joy, playing such antics, and exhibiting such good humour, strength, and agility, that his bride, who had at first been pitied, became the envy of every fisherman's daughter. She would have been more so, could they have foreseen the fame to which she was destined. She had four sons, from whom are descended the four tribes of Ben Jouassim, Ben Ahmed, Ben Nasir, and Ben Saboohil, who are to this day known by the general name of Ben Houl, or the children of Houl. They are all fishermen, boatmen, and pirates, and live chiefly at sea, inheriting, it is believed, the amphibious nature of their common ancestor."

After this tale was concluded, I asked Khudâdâd what kind of men inhabited those high mountains which we saw rising on the Persian shores of the gulf. Delighted at this second opportunity of showing his knowledge, he replied, "They also are robbers, but they are not so bad as the Jouassimee. They refer their first settlement in these mountains to the devil; but

then they are the children of men, and their nature is not diabolical though their deeds are sometimes very like it.”

On questioning Khudâdâd further, I found he had the popular story taken from Firdousee*, and that he kept pretty near to his text; but I shall give it in his own words:—“ You have heard of Zohâk, prince of Arabia?” I said I had. “ Well then,” he continued, “ you know, he was a very wicked man. He conquered Jemsheed, king of Persia, who was in those days deemed the most glorious monarch on earth. After this great success Zohâk was tempted by the devil, who allured him, under the shape of a venerable old man, to kill his father, that he might become king of Arabia as well as Persia. In those days men lived on vegetable diet; but the devil, anxious to destroy as many of the human race as he could, tempted Zohâk with some new roasted eggs, and perceiving him to relish his food, proposed to cook

* Firdousee is the first of the epic poets of Persia, and few countries can boast of a greater genius. His chief work, the *Shâh-nâmeh*, or *Book of Kings*, contains, mixed with allegory and fable, almost all the Persians know of their ancient history.

him a dish of partridges and quails, with the flavour of which the prince was so delighted, that he bade his friend ask any favour he liked. The wily old man said all he wished was to kiss the shoulders of his beloved monarch. They were bared for that purpose ; but no sooner had the infernal lips touched them, than out sprang from each a hissing ravenous serpent, and at the same time the venerable old man changed to his natural shape, and disappeared in a thunder-storm, exclaiming, that human brains alone would satisfy the monsters he had created, and that their death would be followed by that of Zohâk.

“ It fell out as the devil foretold : the serpents refused all other food, and, for a period, two victims were daily slain to satisfy them. Those charged with the preparation of this horrid repast, seeing the devil’s design, determined on frustrating it ; and while they paraded before Zohâk and his serpents the persons who were doomed to death, they substituted the brains of sheep, and sent their supposed human victims to the mountains of Kerman and Lauristan, where they increased, and became a great people, and their descendants still inhabit these

hills. There can be no doubt," said Khudâdâd, gravely, "of the truth of what I have told you ; for it is all written in a book, and a fine poem made upon it, which is called the Shâh-nâmeh, or Book of Kings."

Having acquired this correct information about the shores of the gulf, I landed at Abusheher*, a Persian seaport, celebrated as the mart of chintzes and long-ells, of dates and asafoetida. We were met on the beach by the whole population of the town. What appeared to excite most admiration was the light company of his majesty's 84th regiment, whose uniform appearance caused no slight wonder. Struck with their similarity of look, one man exclaimed, "These fellows must all have had the same father and mother!" "That cannot be," said another, "for they must all have been born on the same day." "They are proper devils, I'll warrant them," said an old woman, who had been looking at them very attentively. They had now received the order to march, and the regularity with which their feet moved was a new subject of surprise. An old merchant,

* Abusheher is the proper name, but it is better known to Europeans by the abbreviated appellation of Bushire.

called Hajee Ismael, whose life had been spent amongst his accounts, and who delighted in every thing that was regular, stood at a corner as they passed in files, and kept saying, as he noted them with his fingers, “correct*, correct, correct.” Take it all in all, our landing seemed to give great pleasure to the men, women, and children of the port of Abusheher.

We had not been on shore a week before two events occurred, one of which showed what the Persians thought of us, and the other taught us what we should think of them.

Before the year 1800 no political mission from an European nation had visited the court of Persia for a century; but the English, though only known in that kingdom as merchants, had fame as soldiers, from the report of their deeds in India. An officer of one of the frigates, who had gone ashore to visit the Envoy, when mounted on a spirited horse, afforded no small entertainment to the Persians by his bad horsemanship. The next day the man who supplied the ship with vegetables, and who spoke a little

* “Hissab,” the Persian word, literally means an account; metaphorically, “correct, or according to a just account.”

English, met him on board and said, “Don’t be ashamed, sir, nobody knows you: bad rider! I tell them, you, like all English, ride well, but that time they see you, very drunk!” We were much amused at this conception of our national character. The Persian thought it would have been a reproach for a man of a warlike nation not to ride well, but none for an European to get drunk.

The other occurrence was still more characteristic. The Envoy or Elchee*, as the Persians called him, had, among other plans for doing good, one for the introduction of potatoes. Among those who listened to him, and applauded his disinterested intentions to benefit Persia, was a fat, smooth-faced young merchant, who obtained a promise of a considerable quantity of potatoes for seed, having (according to his own report) rented a large piece of ground, that he might be an humble instrument in the hands of the British Representative for doing good. The latter, pleased with his zeal, honoured this excellent man with such particular attention, that, conceiving himself a prime favourite, he

* Elchee means ambassador or representative of a foreign nation.

ventured one day to suggest that “As the season was too far advanced for the potatoe-garden that year, it would not be unworthy of the Elchee’s wonted liberality to commute his intended present for a pair of pistols, or a piece of British broadcloth.” This premature disclosure of the real object of this professed improver of the soil produced no little ridicule, in which his countrymen, who were jealous of the favour he had enjoyed, joined most heartily. He was known till the day of his death, which happened three years ago, by the name of Potatoes. It is satisfactory to add, that the plan for introducing this valuable root did not fail; they were found to flourish at Abusheher, where they are called “Malcolm’s* plum,” after the Elchee, who looks to the accident which gave his name to a useful vegetable as one of his best chances of enduring fame.

The English factory, which had long been at Gombroon, had been removed some years before to Abusheher. All the old servants had accompanied it, and one, of the name of Suffer, had recently died, of whom I was delighted to hear, from the best authority, an anecdote, which

* Alou, e, Malcolm.

did credit to the kindness of our countrymen, while it showed that even in this soil, good usage will generate strong and lasting attachment. When poor Suffer, who had been fifty years a servant in the factory, was on his death-bed, the English doctor ordered him a glass of wine. He at first refused it, saying, "I cannot take it; it is forbidden in the Koran." But after a few moments he begged the doctor to give it him, saying, as he raised himself in his bed, "Give me the wine; for it is written in the same volume, that all you unbelievers will be excluded from Paradise; and the experience of fifty years teaches me to prefer your society in the other world, to any place unto which I can be advanced with my own countrymen." He died a few hours after this sally, which I was glad to observe proved of value to his son, a rough-looking lad name Derveish, who was introduced by the Resident to the Envoy, at the time the former told the story of the father's attachment. Derveish was taken into service, and I have watched his gradual advancement till he has become the proprietor of a large boat, which is the ne plus ultra of the ambition of an Abusheheree.

The natives of this place are almost all of Arab race, and fond of the sea; a propensity the more remarkable, as it is in such strong contrast with the disposition of the Persians, of whom all classes have an unconquerable antipathy to that element. But this is not the only characteristic distinction between these classes of men, who appear to agree in nothing but in dwelling in the same town. The Persians, who have been tempted by the hope of gain to exchange the fine climate of the elevated plains of the interior, for the sea-ports on the edge of the sultry desert, which forms the shores of the gulf, retain all the smooth pliant manners of their country; and they look with disgust on what they deem the rude barbarous habits of the Arabians, who are the great body of the inhabitants of this track, and who can scarcely be distinguished, either in look or sentiment, from their kindred on the opposite shore.

A remarkable instance of the difference of character, between the lower orders of these two classes, occurred one morning, when the Envoy was preparing a match, to be run by a beautiful English greyhound called Venus, and a strong Arabian dog named Kessâb, or the Butcher.

He was giving directions to his master of the chase, Hyder, and expressing his sanguine hopes of Venus's success; Mahomed Beg, a tall well-dressed Persian groom, assented to all his anticipations, saying, "What pretensions can that Arab dog have to run with the beautiful greyhound of the Elchee?"

Others joined in the same language, and the opinion appeared general, when an Arab, called Gherreeba*, whose pay was only four piastres† a month, whose chequered turban and cloth round his middle were not worth one, and whose occupation was sitting all day exposed to the sun, watering some grass screens that were placed against the door of the house to exclude the heat—darted up, and, with an eye of fire and the most marked energy, exclaimed, "By the all-powerful God, the Arab dog will triumph ‡!"

Gherreeba was for the moment the representative of the feelings of his country. The

* Gherreeb means poor—this man was really so; but it is not unusual to meet Mahomedans, who are remarkable for their rank, pride, or wealth, with names of similar character, that have been given by their mothers in a spirit of religious humility.

† The value of a piastre is about twenty pence.

‡ Billâh il azeem yadhfar al Arab.

parasites around stood watching the Elchee, and were not a little mortified when they heard him applaud the honest warmth and manly independence of the poor Arab, who was invited to witness the trial. It ended, like most similar trials, in each party being convinced that their own favourite was, or ought to have been, the winner. The dogs ran as usual beautifully: Venus was by far the fleetest; but the chase, which was after a half grown antelope, proved long, and the strength of the Butcher prevailed towards the close. It is, however, justice to the deer species, while we are praising the canine, to add, that the antelope beat them both.

CHAPTER IV.

CAMP AT ABUSHEHER—HORSES—ABDULLA AGA— ANECDOTE OF ARAB.

Soon after we arrived at Abusheher our camp looked like a fair for horses and mules. It was necessary to mount, not only the Elchee and his suite, but his escort of English and Indian cavalry, and all the servants, public and private; for in Persia nobody walks. To suit the different persons of our party animals of different descriptions were wanted; from the coarse Persian galloway* to the Arabian of pure strain†, many of which are bred on the Persian shore, with as much attention to preserve the original blood, as imported from Arabia, as could be shown in the first race-studs in England.

Hyder, the Elchee's master of the chase, was the person who imparted knowledge to me on all subjects relating to Arabian horses. He

* Yaboo.

† *Regee Pâk*, the term by which these high-bred animals are distinguished, means literally "pure veins."

would descant by the hour on the qualities of a colt that was yet untried, but which, he concluded, must possess all the perfections of its sire and dam, with whose histories, and that of their progenitors, he was well acquainted. Hyder had shares in five or six famous brood mares ; and he told me a mare was sometimes divided amongst ten or twelve Arabs, which accounted for the groups of half naked fellows whom I saw watching, with anxiety, the progress made by their managing partner in a bargain for one of the produce. They often displayed, on these occasions, no small violence of temper ; and I have more than once observed a party leading off their ragged colt in a perfect fury, at the blood of Daghee or Shumehtee, or some renowned sire or grandsire, being depreciated by an inadequate offer, from an ignorant Indian or European.

The Arabs place still more value on their mares than on their horses ; but even the latter are sometimes esteemed beyond all price. When the Envoy, returning from his former mission, was encamped near Bagdad, an Arab rode a bright bay horse, of extraordinary shape and beauty, before his tent, till he attracted his notice.

On being asked if he would sell him—"What will you give me?" said he. "It depends upon his age; I suppose he is past five?" "Guess again," was the reply. "Four." "Look at his mouth," said the Arab, with a smile. On examination he was found rising three; this, from his size and perfect symmetry, greatly enhanced his value. The Envoy said, "I will give you fifty tomans*." "A little more, if you please," said the fellow, apparently entertained. "Eighty!—a hundred!" He shook his head and smiled. The offer came at last to two hundred tomans! "Well," said the Arab, seemingly quite satisfied, "you need not tempt me any farther—it is of no use; you are a fine Elchee; you have fine horses, camels, and mules, and I am told you have loads of silver and gold: now," added he, "you want my colt, but you shall not have him for all you have got." So saying he rode off to the desert, whence he had come, and where he, no doubt, amused his brethren with an account of what had passed between him and the European Envoy.

* A toman is a nominal coin nearly the value of a pound sterling.

Inquiry was made of some officers of the Pasha of Bagdad respecting this young man ; they did not know him, but conjectured that, notwithstanding his homely appearance, he was the son or brother of a chief, or perhaps himself the head of a family ; and such Arabs, they said, when in comparative affluence, no money could bribe to sell a horse like the one described.

I was one day relating the above story to Abdulla Aga, the former governor of Bussorah, who was at Abusheher, having been obliged to fly from Turkey. He told me that, when in authority, he several times had great trouble in adjusting disputes among Arab tribes regarding a horse or mare which had been carried off by one of them from another ; not on account of the value of the animals, that having been often offered ten-fold, but from jealousy of their neighbour's becoming possessed of a breed of horses which they desired to remain exclusively in their own tribe. An Arab Shaikh or chief, he told me, who lived within fifty miles of Bussorah, had a favourite breed of horses. He lost one of his best mares, and could not for a long time discover whether she was stolen or had strayed. Some time afterwards, a young man of a dif-

ferent tribe, who had long wished to marry his daughter, but had always been rejected by the Shaikh, obtained the lady's consent and eloped with her. The Shaikh and his followers pursued ; but the lover and his mistress, mounted on the same horse, made a wonderful march, and escaped. The old chief swore that the fellow was either mounted upon the devil or the favourite mare he had lost. After his return he found, on inquiry, the latter was the case ; that the lover was the thief of his mare as well as of his daughter, and that he had stolen the one for the purpose of carrying off the other. He was quite gratified to think he had not been beaten by a horse of another breed, and was easily reconciled to the young man, in order that he might recover the mare, which appeared an object about which he was more solicitous than his daughter.

Abdulla Aga is a man in whose company I take great pleasure. His understanding is vigorous and strong, and he has sufficient knowledge of the English character to speak his sentiments with freedom and confidence. I shall give the substance of a conversation I had with him about two weeks after my arrival, regarding

the present condition of Persia and Turkey, with the resources and character of both which states he is intimately acquainted. Speaking of Turkey, he said he had no idea of its having the power to resist the slightest attack ; and, he believed, if left alone, it would soon fall to pieces of itself.—“ I am myself a Turk, and know my countrymen well : from the Grand Signior to the lowest peasant in the empire, they are alike devoid of public virtue and patriotism ; and that spirit of religion, which has long been the only bond of union that has kept this unwieldy state together, is every day becoming fainter ; and while the Wahâbees are making converts of the inhabitants of Arabia and Syria, the provinces of Turkey in Europe are relaxing from their religious zeal, and becoming every day more ripe for the rule of those Christian nations, under whose power they must soon fall.”

I could not help saying, I thought he drew an overcharged picture of the weak and distracted state of his country. “ You will soon see,” he said, “ whether I am right or wrong. No man, whatever may be his rank, looks beyond his beard in Turkey : if he can find any expedient that gives him a prospect of its growing grey in

quiet, he is content ; and where all are so decidedly selfish in their views, who is to provide for the safety of the state, to guard which there must be some common sentiment of union ?”

“ What think you of Persia ?” I asked. “ Why, twenty times worse than of Turkey,” replied he ; “ because they are to the full as devoid of every public principle, and much more ignorant. Believe me, you will soon be satisfied that they deserve this character. Can there be a doubt, at the present moment, how they ought to act between you and the French ? and yet you will be able to settle nothing with them that is in the least satisfactory, without heavy bribes or harsh measures. The latter,” he added, “ will be the wisest in the present instance ; for to feed their cupidity is only to whet their appetite, and to encourage them in a course that will, in its result, prove as injurious to these short-sighted fools as to the interests of the English government.”

“ The Elchee’s intentions are so friendly,” I observed in reply, “ and his wishes so correspond with their true interests, that they must, I think, meet them, when all the advantages are explained.” “ Before you anticipate success

from such an explanation, you should be certain that those to whom you speak have sense to comprehend you, which the Persians certainly have not. They think of nothing at this moment but the Russians, with whom they have discovered they are not able to contend. The French pretend to relieve them from this formidable danger, which they have not themselves the courage to face; and they cling to this promise without ever considering how far those who make it have the means of performing it. They neither understand the nature nor distance of the resources of England or France, and are consequently incapable of forming a correct idea of the comparative power which those states possess of aiding or injuring them. They know that Bombay is within a month's sail, Madras six weeks, and Calcutta two months; and they believe you have some ships at these places; but even of these they have no clear idea; and as to Europe, they are as ignorant as an Abyssinian."

"Assuredly," said I, "you underrate their knowledge." "I do not," said Abdulla; "they are worse than I have painted them, and their ignorance is so fortified by pride, that there is

no hope of their amendment. Why (said he, with animation), what can you expect from men who are ignorant of the surface of the globe? There," said he, pointing to a rude Turkish book on geography, which lay near him, and appeared to be a translation from an old geographical grammar—"there is the only source of my knowledge, which does not place me on a par with one of your school-boys of twelve years of age, and yet I am a wonder among these fools, who are astonished at the extent of my information in this branch of science."

Though I think it is a very deep and wise observation of that arch politician Machiavel, that the report of a man who has fled his country should not be implicitly trusted, as there must be a bias in his mind to depreciate what he has been obliged to abandon: still there is much truth in the picture which Abdulla drew of Turkey, and his description of the Persians was not greatly exaggerated. The knowledge of that nation is limited to what they see before them, and their ideas of other States are very indistinct and confused, and consequently liable to frequent fluctuations and changes. All ranks in Persia are brought up to admire show and

parade ; and they are more likely to act from the dictates of imagination and vanity, than of reason and judgment. Their character was well drawn by Mahomed Nubbee Khan, the late Ambassador to India. “ If you wish my countrymen to understand you, speak to their eyes, not their ears.”

My conversation with Abdulla Aga was interrupted by the arrival of a Medical Gentleman, who had long resided at Abusheher, and who was not more remarkable for skill in his profession than a kindness of heart, which led him to devote his time to the poor inhabitants of the country who sought his aid. He had just been setting the broken leg of an Arab, of whom he gave us a very characteristic anecdote.

“ The patient,” the doctor said, “ complained more of the accident which had befallen him than I thought becoming in one of his tribe. This I remarked to him, and his answer was truly amusing. ‘ Do not think, doctor, I should have uttered one word of complaint if my own high-bred colt, in a playful kick, had broke both my legs ; but to have a bone broken by a brute of a jackass is too bad, and I will complain.’ ”

This distinction of feeling, as to the mode in which bones are broken, is not confined to the Arabs. I once met an artillery-man, after an action in India, with his arm shattered, who was loudly lamenting his bad fortune. I pointed, in an upbraiding manner, to some fine fellows on the ground, whose luck had been worse. "It is not the wound, sir," he retorted, in a passion, "of which I complain: had I lost a limb by a cannon-ball, I should not have said a word; but to lose one by a rascally rocket would make any one mad!"

CHAPTER V.

HUNTING AND HAWKING—ENTERTAINMENT OF THE
SHAIKH—TOLLEMACHE—MIRAGE—NADIR SHAH
AND TURKISH AMBASSADOR.

WE were kept several weeks at Abusheher; and among other amusements by which we beguiled the tedium of our sojourn at this dull seaport, were those of hunting and hawking; which, according to the Nimrods of our party, are nowhere found in greater perfection: but as the mode of killing the game differs essentially from that of other countries, I shall describe it, that such sportsmen as can read may judge of its merits.

The huntsmen proceed to a large plain, or rather desert, near the sea-side: they have hawks and greyhounds; the former carried in the usual manner, on the hand of the huntsman; the latter led in a leash by a horseman, generally the same who carries the hawk. When the antelope is seen, they endeavour to get as near as possible; but the animal, the moment it ob-

serves them, goes off at a rate that seems swifter than the wind; the horsemen are instantly at full speed, having slipped the dogs. If it is a single deer, they at the same time fly the hawks; but if a herd, they wait till the dogs have fixed on a particular antelope. The hawks, skimming along near the ground, soon reach the deer, at whose head they pounce in succession, and sometimes with a violence that knocks it over. At all events, they confuse the animal so much as to stop its speed in such a degree, that the dogs can come up; and in an instant men, horses, dogs, and hawks, surround the unfortunate deer, against which their united efforts have been combined. The part of the chase that surprised me most was the extraordinary combination of the hawks and the dogs, which throughout seemed to look to each other for aid. This, I was told, was the result of long and skilful training.

The antelope is supposed to be the fleetest quadruped on earth, and the rapidity of the first burst of the chase I have described is astonishing. The run seldom exceeds three or four miles, and often is not half so much. A fawn is an easy victory; the doe often runs a good

chase, and the buck is seldom taken. The Arabs are, indeed, afraid to fly their hawks at the latter, as these fine birds, in pouncing, frequently impale themselves on its sharp horns.

The hawks used in this sport are of a species that I have never seen in any other country. This breed, which is called Cherkh, is not large, but of great beauty and symmetry.

Another mode of running down the antelope is practised here, and still more in the interior of Persia. Persons of the highest rank lead their own greyhounds in a long silken leash, which passes through the collar, and is ready to slip the moment the huntsman chooses. The well-trained dog goes alongside the horse, and keeps clear of him when at full speed, and in all kinds of country. When a herd of antelopes is seen, a consultation is held, and the most experienced determine the point towards which they are to be driven. The field (as an English sportsman would term it) then disperse, and while some drive the herd in the desired direction, those with the dogs take their post on the same line, at the distance of about a mile from each other; one of the worst dogs is then slipped at the herd, and from the moment he singles out an

antelope the whole body are in motion. The object of the horsemen who have greyhounds is to intercept its course, and to slip fresh dogs, in succession, at the fatigued animal. In rare instances the second dog kills. It is generally the third or fourth ; and even these, when the deer is strong, and the ground favourable, often fail. This sport, which is very exhilarating, was the delight of the late King of Persia, Aga Mahomed Khan, whose taste is inherited by the present Sovereign.

The novelty of these amusements interested me, and I was pleased, on accompanying a party to a village, about twenty miles from Abusheher, to see a species of hawking peculiar, I believe, to the sandy plains of Persia, on which the Hubara *, a noble species of bustard, is found on almost bare plains, where it has no shelter

* The Hubara usually weighs from seven to eleven pounds. On its head is a tuft of black and white feathers ; the back of the head and neck are spotted black ; the side of the head and throat are white, as well as the under part of the body ; the breast is slate-coloured ; the feathers of the wing are greenish brown, speckled with black ; the bill of a very dark grey ; and on each side of the neck is a large and handsome tuft of feathers, black and white alternately.

but a small shrub called geetuck. When we went in quest of them we had a party of about twenty, all well mounted. Two kinds of hawks are necessary for this sport ; the first, the Cherkh (the same which is flown at the antelope), attacks them on the ground, but will not follow them on the wing ; for this reason, the Bhyree, a hawk well known in India, is flown the moment the Hubara rises.

As we rode along in an extended line, the men who carried the Cherkhs every now and then unhooded and held them up, that they might look over the plain. The first Hubara we found afforded us a proof of the astonishing quickness of sight of one of the hawks ; he fluttered to be loose, and the man who held him gave a whoop, as he threw him off his hand, and set off at full speed. We all did the same. At first we only saw our hawk skimming over the plain, but soon perceived, at a distance of more than a mile, the beautiful speckled Hubara, with his head erect and wings outspread, running forward to meet his adversary. The Cherkh made several unsuccessful pounces, which were either evaded or repelled by the beak or wings of the Hubara, which at last found an

opportunity of rising, when a Bhyree was instantly flown, and the whole party were again at full gallop. We had a flight of more than a mile, when the Hubara alighted, and was killed by another Cherkh, who attacked him on the ground. This bird weighed ten pounds. We killed several others, but were not always successful, having seen our hawks twice completely beaten, during the two days we followed this fine sport.

The inhabitants of the country over which we hunted are all Arabs. They live, like their brethren in other parts, almost entirely on camels' milk and dates. Their care appears limited to the preservation of the animal and the propagation of the tree, which yield what they account the best of this world's luxuries; and these not only furnish this lively race of men with food, but with almost all the metaphors in which their language abounds. Of this we had an amusing instance: amongst others who accompanied the Elchee on this sporting expedition, was a young Officer, who measured six feet seven inches; he, like others, had lain down to take an hour's repose, between our morning and evening hunt. An old Arab

who was desired to awake him, smiling, said to his servant, "Entreat your date-tree to rise." We had a hearty laugh at our friend, who was not at first quite reconciled to this comparison of his commanding stature to the pride of the desert.

If we were amused by the field diversions of the Persians and Arabs, they were equally so with our mode of hunting. The Elchee had brought a few couples of English fox-hounds, intending them as a present to the Heir-apparent, Abbas Meerza. With this small pack we had several excellent runs. One morning we killed a fox, after a very hard chase; and while the rest of the party were exulting in their success, cutting off poor reynard's brush, praising the hounds, adding some two feet to a wall their horses had cleared, laughing at those who had got tumbles, and recounting many a hair-breadth escape, I was entertained by listening to an Arab peasant, who, with animated gestures, was narrating to a group of his countrymen all he had seen of this noble hunt. "There went the fox," said he, pointing with a crooked stick to a clump of date-trees; "there he went at a great rate; I hallooed, and hal-

loosed, but nobody heard me, and I thought he must get away ; but when he was quite out of sight, up came a large spotted dog, and then another and another ; they all had their noses on the ground, and gave tongue, whow, whow, whow, so loud that I was frightened :—away went these devils, who soon found the poor animal ; after them galloped the Faringees *, shouting and trying to make a noise louder than the dogs : no wonder they killed the fox among them ; but it is certainly fine sport. Our Shaikh has no dogs like these.” The last remark was assented to by all present, and the possession of a breed of dogs, which their Shaikh had not, added not a little, in the eyes of those peasants, to the character of the Mission.

We were now busy preparing to leave Abusheher. Before we took our departure, the Shaikh gave the Elchee and his Suite an entertainment. Among other subjects of conversation at this feast, the name of the Derveish Abdulla, who had some years before visited that port, and sailed for India, was mentioned. I

* Faringee, which is a corruption of Frank, is the name given to an European over all Asia.

smiled as they related stories of his sanctity and learning, and still more as I found different parties, a Turk, a Persian, and an Arab, contending for the honour their country derived from his belonging to it. “You have only to hear him speak, and repeat poetry,” said Hajee Ismael, “to be certain he is a Persian.” “It is his recital of passages of the Koran, that convinces me he is an Arab,” said the Shaikh. “You may say what you like,” said Abdulla Aga, “but no man but a native of Turkey ever spoke Turkish like Derveish Abdulla.”

At this part of the conversation I put in my word, and said, “Really, Gentlemen, you are all mistaken; the far-famed Derveish you mention is a Frenchman, his real name is Tolle-mache, and I know him well.” It was not a mere smile of incredulity with which they listened. The remark I had made, while it received not the least credit, excited unpleasant feelings, and a friend near me whispered that it was better to abstain from the subject.

The following is a short history of this remarkable individual, who has attained such a perfection in the languages and manners of the natives of Asia as to deceive the most learned.

Mons. Tollemache, the son of a Dragoman at Constantinople, was many years ago recommended to Mr. Warren Hastings, who patronized him; but a quarrel, in which he was involved, at Calcutta, led to his leaving that city and going to the north-western part of India, from whence he went into the countries of Cabool, Khorassan, and Persia, and was lost trace of by his European friends for twelve years. His latter name in Persia was the Derveish Abdulla, under which he became renowned for his piety and learning. He had officiated as first reader of prayers* before the late King, who honoured him with his favour. He came to Abusheher, from whence he went to Surat, where, after his overtures of service to the English government had been refused, he proceeded to the Isle of France, and is mentioned in Lord Wellesley's notes as the person employed there with Tippoo Sultan's Ambassadors. On proceeding afterwards to the Red Sea he was made prisoner by Admiral Blanket, and sent to Bombay, where I became acquainted with him at the house of a friend with whom he resided.

* Paish Namaz.

The memory of Tollemache was stored with rare Persian poems and songs : his conversation was, from his various knowledge, very entertaining. Of his power to assume any Asiatic character, the following anecdote will suffice. He had been dilating on his success in deceiving natives of the countries through which he passed, and observed me to be rather incredulous. I had not remarked his leaving the room some minutes before I did, but, when driving out of the gate, I was so annoyed by the importunities of a Mahomedan mendicant, who was almost naked, that I abused him, and threatened to use my whip, if he did not desist, when the fellow burst into a fit of laughter, and asked me if I so soon forgot my acquaintances ? I could hardly credit my eyes and ears on recognising Tollemache ; and the recollection of this occurrence prevented me saying more to my friends at the Shaikh's party, whom I left in the belief that the holy Abdulla was a saint upon earth.

The first march from Abusheher we had to pass over a desert plain of considerable extent, on which I amused myself by watching narrowly the various changes, as we were near or remote

from it, of that singular vapour, called by the French Mirage, and by the Arabs and Persians Sirab.

The influence of this vapour in changing the figure of objects is very extraordinary; it sometimes gives to those seen through it the most fantastical shapes; and, as a general effect, I think it always appears to elevate and make objects seem much taller than they really are. A man, for instance, seen through it at the distance of a mile and a half upon the level plain appears to be almost as tall as a date-tree.

Its resemblance to water is complete, and justifies all the metaphors of poets, and their tales of thirsty and deluded travellers.

The most singular quality of this vapour is its power of reflection. When a near observer is a little elevated, as on horseback, he will see trees and other objects reflected as from the surface of a lake. The vapour, when seen at a distance of six or seven miles, appears to lie upon the earth like an opaque mass; and it certainly does not rise many feet above the ground, for I observed, that while the lower part of the town of Abusheher was hid from the view, some of

the more elevated buildings, and the tops of a few date-trees, were distinctly visible.

Among the presents for his majesty of Persia were two light field-pieces, to which were attached a select detachment of horse-artillery. Great care was taken to equip this party in the best style ; and as they had a difficult march to perform, they were sent in advance, under the tall officer who has been already mentioned. Our third stage to Dalkhee was so rough and stony, that we were alarmed lest we should hear bad accounts of their progress ; but our fears were all dissipated by the reports of the villagers.

“ Their fathers,” they said, “ had never seen such guns, nor such a young man as their Officer.” “ Why,” said an old Moullah, “ I have often seen our guns ; they move only a few yards in an hour, though dragged by a hundred oxen and a hundred men, and at every step the air resounds with ‘ Ya Allah ! ya Allah ! ’ (O God ! O God !) my countrymen being obliged to invoke Heaven to help them in their heavy work ; but your young Officer (who is himself a wonder in size) jumps upon his horse and cries

‘ tap, tap,’ and away trot the guns like feathers. We all came to look at him and his guns, and stared till we were tired ; and every one expressed his admiration. As for me, I have commenced a poem upon the party.” The Elchee, who had been laughing, looked grave at this threat of a kesseeda or ode ; for he is already overwhelmed with such compositions : every man in Persia who can make two lines rhyme in praise of the Mission being anxious to change, as soon as possible, the product of his imagination into solid piastres.

All our baggage and camp equipage was carried upon mules ; and no country can boast of finer animals of this description than Persia. They carry heavy burdens, and travel great distances, at a rate of better than four miles an hour. They go in strings ; and I was amused to see them, when at the end of the march and unloaded, tied in circles, going after each other, at their usual pace, till they were cool.

The Khater-bashee, or master of the mules, is a person of the greatest importance. This class of men are generally known by the strength of their frame, and, above all, of their lungs, which are continually exercised in consigning

man and beast to every species of torment and evil, both in this world and the next. On the first mission to Persia we had a mule-driver called Hajee Hashem, who, from his strength and temper, was the terror of caravans. This man, on our second day's march, anxious to unload his mules, refused to pay any attention to the injunctions of Peter, the Elchee's steward, and carelessly cast a box containing glass upon some loose stones, at the hazard of breaking its contents. Peter, who had been educated on board a man-of-war, and was a very stout fellow, irritated beyond bearing at this treatment of his pantry ware, seized Hajee by the waist, and before he had time to make an effort, cast him over the animal he had so rudely unloaded; and while the astonished mule-driver lay sprawling, and not yet knowing whether his bones were broken, Peter, calling his interpreter, a Persian servant, who had learned a little English at Bombay—"Tell that fellow," he said in a voice which showed his rage was only half expended, "it is lucky for him that his bones are not so brittle as my glass, of which he will take better care another time."

Having witnessed this scene, I anticipated a

complaint to the Elchee ; but what was my surprise to learn, that Hajee Hashem had petitioned to be exclusively attached, with his mules, to Peter's department ! He was so ; they continued always the best of friends ; and no disappointment could be greater than that of the old Hajee, when he came to furnish cattle for the second mission, at finding his ally Peter was not of the party.

The ground of Hajee Hashem's attachment to his friend may be deemed extraordinary ; but had the master muleteer been a historian, he might have pleaded high authority in his own country, for valuing another for superiority in the rough qualities in which he himself excelled.

The emperor of Constantinople, Mahmood the fifth, the great rival of Nadir Shah, desiring to humble the vanity of that conqueror, and knowing he valued himself more on his superior bodily power and stentorian voice than on any other qualities, selected, as an Envoy to Persia, a Porter of extraordinary personal strength and most powerful lungs.

The Envoy had merely charge of a letter, which he was told to deliver in person to the king, to require an answer, and return. The fame of this remarkable diplomatist preceded

him; and Nadir was advised not to receive him, as his deputation was deemed an insult. But curiosity overcame all other considerations, and he was introduced one day that there was a very full court.

When the Turk approached the throne, Nadir, assuming his fiercest look, and exerting his voice to the utmost, said, "What do you desire of me?" Almost all started, and the hall vibrated to the sound; but the Envoy, with an undaunted air, and in a voice of thunder which made Nadir's appear like the treble of a child, exclaimed, "Take that letter, and give me an answer, that I may return to my master."

The court were in amazement; all eyes were turned on Nadir, whose frowning countenance gradually relaxed into a smile, and, turning to his courtiers, he said, "After all, the fellow certainly has merit." He was outdone, but he could not help, like Hajee Hashem, respecting in another the qualities he valued in himself.

Nadir is stated to have retorted the intended insult, by saying to the Envoy, when he gave him leave to depart, "Tell Mahmood I am glad to find he has one man in his dominions, and has had the good sense to send him here, that we may be satisfied of the fact."

CHAPTER VI.

ELCHEE'S LECTURES—MEHMANDAR'S JOURNAL—
ARAB NURSE—BLUE-BEARD—PERSIAN CEREMONY
—KING'S PICTURE.

THE Elchee, from the moment we landed in Persia, has been lecturing us on the importance of the conduct of every individual, as connected with a just impression of the national character. "These Persians," said he to us one day, "have no knowledge beyond their country; they understand no language but their own and Arabic; and though all the better classes read, the books to which they have access afford them little if any information, except of Asia. Europe, in fact, is only known by name, and by general and confused accounts of the fame of its nations, and their comparative greatness. They are, however," he added, "a very keen and observing people, and full of curiosity. In the absence of books, they will peruse us, and, from what they hear and see, form their opinion of our country. Let us take care, therefore, that nothing is found in the page but what is for the honour of England; and believe me that, with such a people,

more depends upon personal impressions than treaties.”

With these sentiments, every word and act was shaped by him, and, so far as he could command and influence them, by others, to raise the English character. It was not enough that we were to give an example of all kinds of good qualities, but we were to be active and capable of fatigue, to show the Persians we were soldiers. The Envoy or Elchee, as they called him, happened to have a robust form, and a passion for shooting and hunting. It was, therefore, nothing more than an amusement to him to ride fifty or sixty miles of a morning, that he might surpass his Mehmandar or entertainer in his own line, but it was far otherwise to many of his suite. I did not like it; and a near relation of his, who was rather weak, and, like me, of sedentary habits, used to inveigh bitterly against these “political rides,” as he scoffingly termed them. There was, however, some sense in the Elchee’s proceedings, as I discovered, when an intimacy with our old Mehmandar, Mahomed Sheriff Khan, a Burgashattee*, led

* Burgashattee is the name of a small Turkish tribe, of which this old nobleman was chief.

to his showing me a journal he had written for the information of the court by whom he was deputed, in order to enable them to judge, by the aid of his observations, what kind of a person and nation they had to deal with. I shall transcribe the passage, which was literally as follows:

“ The Elchee, and the English Gentlemen with him, rise at dawn of day; they mount their horses and ride for two or three hours, when they come home and breakfast. From that time till four o’clock, when they dine, the Elchee is either looking at horses, conversing, reading, or writing; he never lies down, and, if he has nothing else to do, he walks backwards and forwards before his tent-door, or within it. He sits but a short time at dinner, mounts his horse again in the evening, and when returned from his ride, takes tea, after which he converses, or plays at cards till ten o’clock, when he retires to rest; and next day pursues nearly the same course.

“ What I chiefly remark is, that neither he nor any of the Gentlemen sleep during the day, nor do they ever, when the weather is warm, recline upon carpets as we do. They are certainly very restless persons; but when it is con-

sidered that these habits cause their employing so much more time every day in business, and in acquiring knowledge, than his Majesty's subjects, it is evident that at the end of a year they must have some advantage. I can understand, from what I see, better than I could before, how this extraordinary people conquered India. My office is very fatiguing, for the Elchee, though a good-natured man, has no love of quiet, and it is my duty to be delighted with all he does, and to attend him on all occasions."

This journal was written upon observations made before we left Abusheher. The poor old Mehmandar was compelled, soon after we marched, to slack in his constant attendance; for, as the Elchee's duty and inclination coincided, he was seldom satisfied with a stage of twenty or thirty miles, but usually went out in the evening of the same day to hunt, which, no doubt, made the desired impression, and led the Persians in his Suite to think, if the English, in very sport, so harassed their friends, what would become of their enemies?

My friend, Mahomed Sheriff Khan, was, as appears from his journal, a keen observer. He had the reputation of being a good soldier; but

his distinguishing feature was pride in his condition, as the chief of a tribe, and as representing, in his person, a portion of the authority of the King of Kings! This pride, however, which often flamed forth in real or assumed rage, was much regulated in its action by a regard for his own interests. He was always civil to the Elchee, and those with him, but to all upon whom his office gave him claims his demeanour was haughty and overbearing, till soothed by concession or bribes. I met the Mehmandar one morning, with a man leading a beautiful Arab colt, to which he pointed, saying, "That old scoundrel, Shaikh Nasser (Governor of Abusheher), had very nearly deprived me of that animal." "What!" said I, "could he venture to take him from you?" "No," said he; "the horse was his; but he had concealed him so carefully that I was near going away without getting him. I heard of him before I left Shiraz, and have been on the search ever since I came to Abusheher. I have just found him, hidden in an inner room, covered with dirt: and then to hear how the old fool whined about this colt of his favourite Daghee*, as he called him. He meant

* A celebrated stud-horse of Shaikh Nasser.

him, he said, to mount his son, a puny wretch, who was standing by, entreating me to listen to his father's prayer, and not to take away their only favourite; to save which, they offered several useless animals and some money. But I laughed out loud," concluded Mahomed Sheriff Khan, stroking his grizzly beard, "and said, they knew little of an old wolf like me, if they thought I was to be moved by their bleating, or tricked by their cunning. Go," said I to the old Shaikh, "and build a boat for that hopeful heir of yours; it will befit him better than a horse like this, which is only suited for a son of mine to ride upon."

I soon afterwards saw old Shaikh Nasser moving slowly along, muttering his usual phrase, "There's no harm done*: Persian scoundrels, Arab fools, all will go to hell together! God is just!—Well, well, there's no harm done." I spoke to him—he took no notice, but went to his usual seat to superintend some carpenters, who were building a vessel which had been on the stocks about seventy years; there his smothered

* *Aibee na dared*, which is literally translated in the text, was a phrase used by this old chief on every occasion.

passion found vent in the most virulent abuse of all his tribe who approached him. When I spoke to him some time afterwards, he seemed in better humour. “This ship,” said he, pointing to the ribs of the rude vessel, “will be finished some day or other, and she will hold us all: there is no harm done.”

Mahomed Sheriff Khan used to laugh at his own habits, which he deemed less personal than belonging to his condition. One day, when riding through the streets, he observed me looking significantly at his Turkuman horse stretching his long neck to seize some greens, which a man was carrying in a basket on his head—“He has learnt it*,” said my friend, with a smile.

When I looked on the desert arid plains which lie between Abusheher and the mountains, and saw the ignorant, half-naked, swarthy men and women broiling under a burning sun, with hardly any food but dates, my bosom swelled with pity for their condition, and I felt the dignity of the human species degraded by their contented looks. “Surely,” said I to Khojah Arratoon, an Armenian (known in the

* *Amookhta ast.*

mission by the name of Blue-beard*), “these people cannot be so foolish as to be happy in this miserable and uninstructed state. They appear a lively, intelligent race—can they be insensible to their comparatively wretched condition? Do they not hear of other countries? have they no envy, no desire for improvement?” The good old Armenian smiled, and said, “No;” they are a very happy race of people, and so far from envying the condition of others, they pity them. But,” added he, seeing my surprise, “I will give you an anecdote which will explain the ground of this feeling.

“Some time since, an Arab woman, an inhabitant of Abusheher, went to England † with the children of a Mr. Beaman. She remained

* The nick-name of Blue-beard was given by some of the young men of our party to our Treasurer, Khojah Arratoon, from that colour being one day predominant in the dye he had used to ornament his beard. This excellent man is now no more.

† This story has been told by Sir John Malcolm, in his history, in illustration of some of his facts or opinions; but he has taken this, and many other equally good things, from me, without ever acknowledging them; I shall, therefore, stand on no ceremony when it suits my purpose to reclaim my property.

in your country four years. When she returned, all gathered round her to gratify their curiosity about England. ‘What did you find there? is it a fine country? are the people rich—are they happy?’ She answered, ‘The country was like a garden; the people were rich, had fine clothes, fine houses, fine horses, fine carriages, and were said to be very wise and happy.’ Her audience were filled with envy of the English, and a gloom spread over them, which showed discontent at their own condition. They were departing with this sentiment, when the woman happened to say, ‘England certainly wants one thing.’ ‘What is that?’ said the Arabs eagerly. ‘There is not a single date-tree in the whole country!’ ‘Are you sure?’ was the general exclamation. ‘Positive,’ said the old nurse; ‘I looked for nothing else all the time I was there, but I looked in vain.’ This information produced an instantaneous change of feeling among the Arabs: it was pity, not envy, that now filled their breasts; and they went away, wondering how men could live in a country where there were no date-trees!”

This anecdote was told me as I was jogging

on the road, alongside my friend Blue-beard, on our first march from Abusheher. I rode the remainder of the way (ten good miles) without speaking a word, but pondering on the seeming contradiction between the wisdom of Providence and the wisdom of man. I even went so far as to doubt the soundness of many admirable speeches and some able pamphlets I had read, regarding the rapid diffusion of knowledge. I changed to a calculating mood, and began to think it was not quite honest, even admitting it was wise, to take away what men possessed, of content and happiness, until you could give them an equal or greater amount of the same articles.

Before leaving Abusheher we had received many proofs of the favour of the Prince Regent of Shiraz. Soon after our arrival at that place, a favourite officer of his Guards brought a present of twelve mule-loads of fruit. When this young man came to pay his respects to the Elchee, Khojah Arratoon desired to withdraw. When asked the reason: "Why," said he, "the person who is deputed by the Prince is a Georgian, the son of my next door neighbour

in Teflis. When Aga Mahomed Khan plundered that city in 1797, he was made a prisoner, with twenty or thirty thousand young persons of both sexes; and having since been compelled to become a Mahomedan, and now enjoying high rank, he may be embarrassed at seeing me." The Envoy said, "It does not signify; you are my Treasurer, and must be present at the visit of ceremony: depend upon it he will not notice you." It was as predicted; the bearer of the present, a very handsome young man, superbly dressed, and of finished manners, appeared to have no knowledge of Arratoon, though his eye rested on him once or twice. When the visit was over, the good Armenian could not contain himself: "The vile Mahomedan wretch!" he exclaimed, "he has lost sight and feeling, as well as religion and virtue. Have I given him sweetmeats so often, to be stared at as a stranger? I should like to know who was his father, that he should look down upon me. It will be a mournful tale," he concluded, "that I shall have to write to his mother, who is in great distress, and who, poor deluded creature! lives in hopes that there is still some good in this dog of a son of hers." There was a mix-

ture of wounded pride, of disappointment, and humanity, in Blue-beard's sentiments, that made them at once amusing, and affecting.

He came, however, early next morning to the Envoy with a very different countenance, and evidently deeply affected. "What injustice have I not done," said he, "to that excellent young man! He sent a secret messenger to me last night; and when we met, ran to embrace me, and after telling me the short tale of his captivity, sufferings, and subsequent advancement, inquired in the most earnest manner after his mother. He has not only given a hundred tomans to relieve her immediate wants, but has settled that I am to be the Agent for future remittances. He informed me that he recognised the friend of his youth, and never had more difficulty than in the effort to appear a stranger; but he explained his reasons for being so cautious: he is not only a Mahomedan, but has married into a respectable family, and is a great favourite with the Prince, and must, therefore, avoid any conduct that could bring the least shade of suspicion on the sincerity of his faith or allegiance. I shall make his mother very happy," continued Blue-beard, who was evidently quite flattered by the

personal attention of the young Georgian, and the confidence reposed in him; “for I will, when I send her the tomans, tell her my conviction, that her son, whatever he may profess, is a Christian in his heart. Indeed he must be so; for if he had been a true Mahomedan he would have acted like one, and have disowned, not supported, his mother, whom he must consider an infidel.”

The Prince Regent of Fars, or Persia Proper, sent, soon after our arrival at Abusheher, a young Nobleman of his own tribe, Hassan Khan Kajir, to attend the Elchee as Mehmandar. My intimacy, from old acquaintance, with Jaffier Khan, Governor of Abusheher, led to his showing me the letter he had received from his brother, the Prince’s vizier, regarding the reception of this personage. It is so good a specimen of the minute attention the Persians give to forms that I translated it. Its contents were as follows:

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“HASSAN Khan Kajir, who is appointed Mehmandar to General Malcolm, is a Nobleman of the first rank and family. He will keep you informed of his progress. When he arrives at

Dalkhee * he will send on this letter, and write you on the subject of his waiting upon the General, the day he comes to camp. You will proceed to meet him, with all the Garrison of Abusheher, as far as the date-trees on the border of the desert. You will accompany him to General Malcolm's tent, and, when he leaves it, you will proceed with him to his own tent, which must be pitched as the General desires, on the right or left of his encampment. If Hassan Khan Kajir arrives in the morning, you will stay and breakfast with him ; if in the evening, you will dine with him. Your future attention will be regulated by your politeness and good sense, and you will always consider him as a Noble guest, who should be entertained in a manner suitable to his rank and the distinguished situation to which he is appointed, of Mehmandar to General Malcolm."

The Mehmandar wrote a letter with this, in which he explained to the Governor, as modestly as the subject would admit, his own expectations. The Governor was anxious to know how the Envoy would receive him ; and when told that

* Fifty miles from Bushire.

two Officers would meet him at a short distance from the camp, and that the Escort would be drawn up before the tent at which he alighted to salute him, his mind was at rest, as he was sure such attention would be gratifying to this sixteenth cousin of Majesty.

Hassan Khan made his appearance next day, and proved to be a fine young man, about twenty-six years of age, of excellent manners and handsome in person, with grey eyes, and a very pleasing expression of countenance. At this visit he was profuse in professions of the regard in which the King and Prince held the Elchee, both of whom, he said, were anxious for the advance of the Mission.

It is not only in attention to persons, deputed by Kings and Princes in Persia, that respect for royalty is shown ; it extends to the reception of letters, dresses, and presents, and every inanimate thing with which their name is associated. The object is to impart to all ranks a reverence and awe for the sovereign and those to whom he delegates power. In short, no means are neglected that can keep alive, or impress more deeply, the duty of implicit obedience.

Some time before we landed at Abusheher,

the Envoys of Scind had been at that port on their return from Teheran. They carried, among other presents to their Prince, a picture of his Majesty, Fattah Ali Shah. This painting was carefully packed in a deal box ; but the inclosed image of royalty could not be allowed to pass through his dominions without receiving marks of respect hardly short of those that would have been shown to the sovereign himself.

The Governor and inhabitants of Abusheher went a stage to meet it : they all made their obeisance at a respectful distance. On its entering the gates of the city a royal salute was fired ; and when the Envoys who had charge of it embarked, the same ceremonies were repeated, and not a little offence was taken at the British Resident because he declined taking a part in this mummary.

CHAPTER VII.

MOUNTAINEERS—VALLEY OF KAZEROON—VIRTUE OF NITRIC ACID—RIZA KOOLI KHAN'S LOSS OF EYES—EXTRAORDINARY BIRDS—BEAUTIFUL VALLEY OF DUSHT-E-ARJUN—MAHOMED RIZA KHAN BYAT—IRISH PATRIOTISM—PERSIAN SQUIRE.

NOTHING can be more striking than the change from the Gurmaseer, or hot region, as they term the arid track on the shores of the Persian Gulf, to the fine climate and rich soil of the elevated plains of the interior of that country. After travelling fifty-five miles, we reached the mountains. From the village of Dalkhee, famous for its date plantations, and streams impregnated with naphtha, and which lies at the foot of the first range, we proceeded by narrow paths, which wound along the face of the rugged and steep mountain we were ascending. When near its summit, we were met by the Chiefs of the tribes and villages in the vicinity. These, with their principal adherents on horseback, were drawn up on the crest of the mountain, while their other followers sprang

from rock to rock, firing their matchlocks in honour of the strangers. Their ragged clothing, their robust forms, their rapid evolutions (which, though apparently in disorder, were all by signal), amid precipices, where it seemed dangerous to walk, the reports of their fire-arms reverberating from the surrounding hills, gave an interest to these scenes which a fine writer might dwell on for pages, but I shall content myself with the fact, that we passed in security the two great ranges of mountains that intervene between the sea-shore and the valley of Kazeroon; on entering which, our eyes were not only cheered by rich fields, but also with wild myrtle, blackberry bushes, and willows. The latter, shadowing small but clear rivulets, gave me and others a feeling of home, which he who has not travelled in a far distant land can never understand. Those of our party who had not been in Persia before were quite delighted at the change of scene, and began to give us credit for the roses and nightingales which we promised them on its still happier plains. What they had seen of the inhabitants of the mountains we had passed inclined them to believe the marvellous tales we told of the tribe of

Mama Sunee, who boast of having preserved their name and habits unaltered from the time of Alexander the Great.

We had good reason, when on the first Mission, to remember this tribe, who, in conformity to one of their most ancient usages, had plundered a part of our baggage that was unfortunately left without a guard in our rear. The loss would have been greater but for a curious incident. Among the camels left behind was one loaded with bottles containing nitric acid, which had been furnished in considerable quantities to us at Bombay. The able Physician* who discovered its virtues was solicitous that its efficacy should have a fair trial in Persia ; and it certainly proved a sovereign remedy in an extreme case, but one in which he had not anticipated its effects. The robbers, after plundering several camel-loads, came to that with the nitric acid. They cast it from the back of the animal upon the ground. The bottles broke, and the smoke and smell of their contents so alarmed the ignorant and superstitious Mama Sunees, that they fled in dismay, fully satisfied that a pent-up

* The late Dr. Helenus Scott.

genie of the Faringees had been let loose, and would take ample vengeance on them for their misdeeds. The truth of this was proved by the testimonies of the camel-drivers, the subsequent confession of some of the thieves, and the circumstance of several of the loads which were near the nitric acid being untouched.

The city of Kazeroon is situated near the ancient Shapoor, with whose ruins antiquarians are delighted, and whose deserted fields were equally prized by our sportsmen, from their abounding with game.

I was myself much amused with a hunt of black partridges* at this place, on which we were accompanied by thirty or forty horsemen. They scattered themselves over a grassy plain, and the moment a partridge was flushed, the man nearest it gave a shout, while such as were

* The Derraj, or black partridge, takes its name from its breast, which is of that colour; the rest of its body is very much variegated. Its throat and legs are red, as also the under parts of its tail; its head is black, arched with spotted brown and white feathers, and one spot of white below its eye.

This beautiful bird is found in the higher latitudes of India and in Persia; it is very common on the banks of the Tigris.

in the direction it flew rode after the bird, which was hardly allowed to touch the ground before it was raised again, and hunted as before. Its flights became shorter ; and after three or four, when quite exhausted, it was picked up by one of the horsemen, several of whom had little dogs called “sceners,” to aid them in finding the partridge when it took shelter in the long grass or bushes. We caught about twenty brace of birds the first morning that I partook in this sport.

Riza Kooli Khan, the Governor of Kazeroon, came to pay the Elchee a visit. This old nobleman had a silk band over his eye-sockets, having had his eyes put out during the late contest between the Zend and Kajir families for the throne of Persia. He began, soon after he was seated, to relate his misfortunes, and the tears actually came to my eyes at the thoughts of the old man’s sufferings ; when judge of my surprise to find it was to entertain, not to distress us, he was giving the narration, and that, in spite of the revolting subject, I was compelled to smile at a tale, which in any country except Persia would have been deemed a subject for a tragedy : but as poisons may by use be-

come aliment, so misfortunes, however dreadful, when they are of daily occurrence, appear like common events of life. But it was the manner and feelings of the narrator that, in this instance, gave the comic effect to the tragedy of which he was the hero.

“ I had been too active a partisan,” said Riza Kooli Khan, “ of the Kajir family, to expect much mercy when I fell into the hands of the rascally tribe of Zend. I looked for death, and was rather surprised at the lenity which only condemned me to lose my eyes. A stout fellow of a ferash* came as executioner of the sentence ; he had in his hand a large blunt knife, which he meant to make his instrument : I offered him twenty tomans if he would use a penknife I showed him. He refused in the most brutal manner, called me a merciless villain, asserting that I had slain his brother, and that he had solicited the present office to gratify his revenge, adding, his only regret was not being allowed to put me to death.

“ Seeing,” continued Riza Kooli, “ that I had

* Ferash is a menial servant employed in a house to keep it clean and take care of the furniture. He also pitches tents, spreads carpets, &c. &c.

no tenderness to look for from this fellow, I pretended submission, and laid myself on my back ; he seemed quite pleased, tucked up his sleeves, brandished his knife, and very composedly put one knee on my chest, and was proceeding to his butchering work, as if I had been a stupid innocent lamb, that was quite content to let him do what he chose. Observing him, from this impression, off his guard, I raised one of my feet, and planting it on the pit of his stomach, sent him heels over head in a way that would have made you laugh (imitating with his foot the action he described, and laughing heartily himself at the recollection of it). I sprung up ; so did my enemy ; we had a short tussle—but he was the stronger ; and having knocked me down, succeeded in taking out my eyes.

“The pain at the moment,” said the old Khan, “was lessened by the warmth occasioned by the struggle. The wounds soon healed ; and when the Kajirs obtained the undisputed sovereignty of Persia, I was rewarded for my suffering in their cause. All my sons have been promoted, and I am Governor of this town and province. Here I am in affluence, and en-

joying a repose to which men who can see are in this country perfect strangers. If there is a deficiency of Revenue, or any real or alleged cause for which another Governor would be removed, beaten, or put to death, the king says, ‘Never mind, it is poor blind Riza Kooli; let him alone :’ so you observe, Elchee, that I have no reason to complain, being in fact better defended from misfortune by the loss of my two eyes, than I could be by the possession of twenty of the clearest in Persia :” and he laughed again at this second joke.

Meerza Aga Meer, the Persian secretary, when commenting upon Riza Kooli Khan’s story, said that his grounds of consolation were substantial ; for that a stronger contrast could not exist between his condition, as he had described it, and that of others who are employed as Revenue officers under the present administration of Fars. “I cannot better,” said he, “illustrate this fact than by the witty and bold answer given a short time since by one of the Nobles to the Prince Regent at Shiraz. The Prince asked of his advisers what punishment was great enough for a very heinous offender who was brought before him : ‘Make him a

Collector of Revenue,' said an old favourite Nobleman ; ' there can be no crime for which such an appointment will not soon bring a very sufficient punishment.' "

We had an amusing account of an adventure which had occurred at Kazeroon to two Gentlemen of the Mission, who had been sent some months before to Shiraz. One of these, a relation of the Elchee, I have before mentioned as particularly averse to what he deemed unnecessary fatigue of body. But he and his companion had their curiosity so much raised by the accounts they received of two strange creatures, that were said to be in a house at the distance of fifteen miles, that in spite of the severity of the weather (for it was winter), and the difficulties of the road, they determined to go and see them.

In answer to their inquiries, one man said, " These creatures are very like birds, for they have feathers and two legs ; but then their head is bare and has a fleshy look, and one of them has a long black beard on its breast." But the chief point on which they dwelt was the singularity of their voice, which was altogether unlike that of any other bird they had ever

heard of or seen. An old man, who had gone from Kazeroon to see them, declared it was a guttural sound very like Arabic, but confessed that though he had listened with great attention, he had not been able to make out one word they uttered.

When the party arrived, very fatigued, at the end of their journey, the inhabitants of the small village where the objects of curiosity were kept came out to meet them. Being conducted to the house where the birds were shut up, the door was opened, and out marched—a turkey-cock and hen! the former, rejoicing in his release from confinement, immediately commenced his Arabic. The Persians who came from Kazeroon were lost in astonishment, while our two friends looked at each other with that expression of countenance which indicates a doubt, between an inclination to laugh or to be angry; the former feeling however prevailed. Their merriment surprised the Persians, who, on being informed of its cause, seemed disappointed to hear that the birds which appeared so strange to them were very common both in India and England.

From the account given by the possessor of

the turkeys, it appeared that they had been saved from the wreck of a vessel in the Gulf, and had gradually come to the part of the interior where they then were.

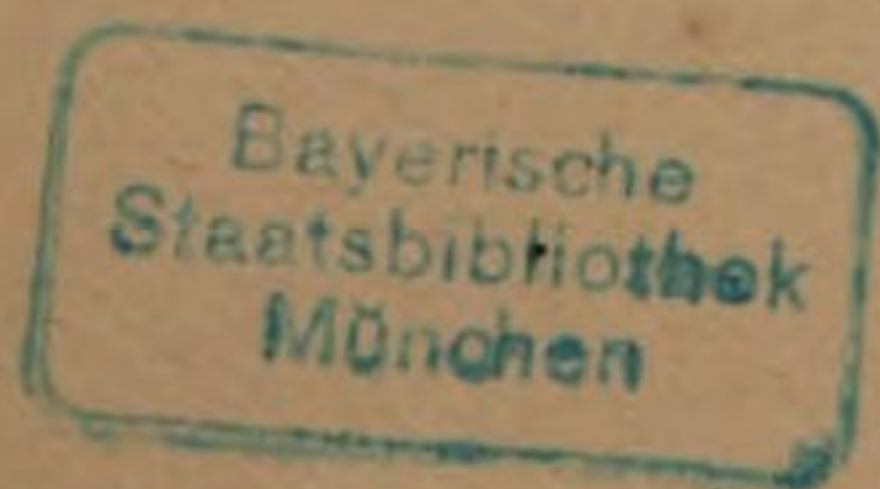
From Kazeroon to Dusht-e-Arjun is but a short distance, but the ascent is great; and pleased as we had been with Kazeroon, we found all nature with a different aspect in this small but delightful valley, which is encircled by mountains, down whose rugged sides a hundred rills contribute their waters to form the lake in its centre. The beauty of these streams, some of which fall in a succession of cascades from hills covered with vines; the lake itself, in whose clear bosom is reflected the image of the mountains by which it is overhung; the rich fields on its margin; and the roses, hyacinths, and almost every species of flower that grow in wild luxuriance on its borders, made us gaze with admiration on this charming scene; while the Persians, who enjoyed our looks and expressions of delight, kept exclaiming, "Iran hemeen ast!—Iran hemeen ast!" This is Persia! —This is Persia!

I was rejoiced on this day's march to meet my old friend Mahomed Riza Khan Byat, who

had come from Shiraz to compliment the Elchee. He galloped up to me like a boy, calling out "You are welcome." I could hardly believe my eyes on finding him look younger and brisker than he did when I left him ten years before, at the age of sixty-eight, eating, every day, a quantity of opium that was enough, according to the calculation of our doctor, to poison thirty persons unaccustomed to that drug. My regard for the old gentleman had led to my taking no small pains to break him of a habit that I was persuaded would destroy him; and the doctor, from the same impression, was my zealous auxiliary. For him my friend inquired the moment he had welcomed me; when told he was in India, he replied, laughing, "I am sorry he is not here; I would show him that Christian doctors, though they can, according to our belief, through the aid and influence of their Messiah, work miracles, as he did, by curing the blind and the lame, are not all true prophets. He told me I should die if I did not diminish my allowance of opium; I have increased it four-fold since he in his wisdom predicted my demise, and here I am, near fourscore, as young and as active as any of them:"

so saying, he pushed his horse to speed, and turning his body quite round, according to the habit of the ancient Parthians with the bow, and the modern Persians with the match-lock, fired a ball at a mark in the opposite direction to that in which he was galloping. Riding up to me, he first stroked his beard, which was too well dyed to discover a single white hair, and then taking out a box I had given him ten years before, opened it, and literally cast down his throat a handful of opium pills, repeating, "I wish my friend the doctor had been here!"

I rode along with Mahomed Riza the remainder of the march; and, according to his account, the condition of Persia was greatly improved. Indeed the internal peace it had enjoyed since the full establishment of the power of the late king Aga Mahomed Khan, must of itself have produced that effect; for Nature has been so bountiful to this country in climate, soil, and in every animal and vegetable production, that man, spoilt as he is by her indulgence, cannot, without great and continued efforts, destroy the blessings by which he is surrounded. I was more pleased at my friend dwelling with a calm and contented mind on this great change



from a knowledge of his history. His father, Salah Khan, was one of the chief Omrahs, or Nobles, at the Court of Nadir Shah when that conqueror was murdered. On that event Kings started up in every province. Salah Khan among others entered the lists. He seized upon Shiraz, the fortifications of which he extended and improved; but his enjoyment of a royal name was short; he was made prisoner, and put to death by Kerreem Khan. His son, whose character is marked by the absence of ambition, has passed through life with respect as the Chief of a tribe, but without enjoying, or perhaps desiring, any station of consequence. He is of a happy and contented frame of mind, and speaks of the latter part of his father's life as a brilliant but troubled dream of power, to which he was very fortunate not to succeed.

The Prince and great men of Shiraz, on our approaching that city, so loaded the Elchee with presents of ice-creams, sweet-meats, preserves, and delicious fruits, that all in camp, down to the keepers of the dogs, were busied in devouring these luxuries. A lion's share was always allotted to a party of the 17th dragoons, which forms part of the escort. I heard these fine

fellows, who were all (with the exception of one man) from Ireland, discussing, as they were eating their ices, their preserves, their grapes, and nectarines, the merits of Persia. "It is a jewel of a country," says one. "It would be," said a second, "if there were more Christians in it." "I don't so much mind the Christians," observed his companion, "if I could see a bog now and then, instead of these eternal rocks and valleys, as they call them." "Fine though it be," concluded corporal Corragan, "I would not give a potatoe-garden in little Ireland for a dozen of it, and all that it contains to boot." This patriotic sentiment, which appeared to meet with general concurrence, closed the discussion.

The morning we left Dusht-e-Arjun, I rode a short way with an old reis or squire, who is a proprietor of a considerable part of the valley. "How happy you are," I said, "in possessing a tract so fertile, so beautiful, and with such rich verdure." The old man shook his head: "That verdure you so much admire," said he, "is our ruin; our valley is the best grazing land in Persia, and the consequence is, princes and nobles send their mules here to fatten; and

while our fields of grain and our gardens are trampled by these animals, we have to endure the insolence, and often the oppression, of their servants; and these fellows in our country (I don't know what they are in yours) are always ten times worse than their masters."

CHAPTER VIII.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE MISSION—MAHOMED HOOSEIN KHAN—JAFFIER ALI KHAN—MEERZA AGA MEER—MAHOMED HOOSEIN—HAJEE HOOSEIN—CANDIDATES FOR THE ELCHEE'S FAVOUR.

BEFORE I proceed further on my journey, I must introduce my reader to some of the principal characters, Indian and Persian, with whom I associated. These were my companions every where ; and I owed much of the information and amusement I derived on my visit to Persia to their remarks and communications. No persons could differ more from each other than my friends. This resulted, in part, from their dispositions, but more from the opposite scenes in which they had passed their lives. But a short account of them will best exhibit their respective characters.

The first, Mahomed Hoosein Khan, is a person who is attached to the mission, more as a companion to the Envoy, than in any specific em-

ployment. He is my particular friend, and is one of almost every party in which I mix; rides with me, talks nonsense with me, besides cutting jokes, writing epigrams, and telling stories; therefore I must give a short sketch of him, otherwise he will never be understood. Khan Sahib, or "my Lord," is the name by which my friend is usually known, though he has a right, from his inheritance, to the higher title of Nabob. He is about five feet three inches high; his face, though plain, has an expression which marks quickness and intelligence, and the lively turn of his mind has its effect heightened from an impression of gravity, conveyed by a pair of large spectacles, which, being shortsighted, he always wears. His frame is not robust, and his whole appearance indicates the over-care that has been bestowed upon his childhood, and the enervating pleasures in which his youth, according to the usage of Mahomedans of quality, has been passed. He has, however, notwithstanding early habits of luxury, if not of dissipation, received an excellent education. He is a tolerable Arabic scholar, and has few superiors in Persian; he writes that language with the greatest elegance, and is no

mean composer, either in prose or verse. Add to these qualifications a cheerful disposition, an excellent memory, with a ready wit, and you have my little friend.

The father of Khan Sahib was a Persian, who went, in early life, to improve his fortunes in India. He succeeded in recommending himself to Mr. Duncan at Benares, and, after that gentleman became Governor of Bombay, he appointed his Persian friend Resident at Abusheher, and in 1798 sent him on a mission to the court of Persia. This preferment naturally excited ambitious views ; and, among other means by which he sought to ennoble his family, was the marriage of his eldest son, my friend, to the daughter of an ex-Prince of the Zend family, who being in exile, and poor, was glad that his falling star (to use an Asiatic figure) should come in conjunction with one that he thought was in the ascendant. But the father died soon after he had grafted his son on this branch of a decayed tree of royalty, leaving the latter what he often laughingly calls “The sad inheritance of poverty and rank combined with a most dignified wife,” who, if he is to be believed, not unfrequently reminds him of her high birth,

and is rather wont to dwell upon her condescension in allying herself to him. "I could," he added, the other day, "have given her some reasons for that act of prudence, but it would only have made her worse, and God knows what her violence might have prompted, so I kept quiet."

Here Khan Sahib betrayed his foible, which is certainly extreme prudence. He is in the habit of wearing yellow boots with high heels, loose red cloth trowsers, which are half displayed by a tunic tucked up, like that of the most valiant among the horsemen of Persia. His high lamb's-wool cap has, when he is equipped for a march, the true military pinch; two small pistols and a dagger are stuck in his girdle, and to a waistbelt is fastened a powder-flask and a bag of bullets; a large sabre hangs by an embroidered cross-belt, while a shorter sword, for close quarters, is fastened to his saddle; to the front of which is attached a pair of holsters that contain two large horse-pistols. In spite of all these indications of desperate courage, aided by an upright and imposing seat on horseback, and sufficient boldness in galloping to and fro on a smooth plain, there is some want of that forward

valour which depends more upon itself than the arsenal of great and small arms it carries for its defence. My friend is quite sensible of this deficiency, and is at times very happy in his allusions to the fact, and can very wittily philosophise upon the causes.—Want of stamina—coddled infancy—indulged youth—fear of his father—and terror of his royal wife, form the principal items in the list. “But,” he is wont to add, “if I have, from a combination of causes, lost that strength of nerve which constitutes brute courage, I trust I have a manly spirit, the result of reflection, which, on proper occasions, you will always see me exert.”

This is, no doubt, the case; but I never happened to be present on any of these “proper occasions,” and I was one of a party, where we were almost diverted from thinking of danger by his ludicrous behaviour at its approach.

The Elchee having particular business when we were lying in Abusheher Roads, had determined to land; though the sea was rough, and the waves ran very high on the bar at the mouth of the harbour. The Khan, who had recently been attached to the Mission, insisted on going, though advised not: he was very courageous

till we came on the bar, where the waves that chased each other seemed at every moment as if they would overwhelm our little bark. To each of these, as they rose and pursued us with their foaming crests, Khan Sahib addressed a rapid invocation—"Allah, Allah, Allah!" (God, God, God!) and the moment we were safe from its fury, he, in a still more hurried way, repeated his gratitude; "Shooker, shooker, shooker!" (thanks, thanks, thanks!) These invocations and thanksgivings were repeated with great volubility and wonderful earnestness; Allah, Allah, Allah! and Shooker, shooker, shooker! continued to sound in our ears for a quarter of an hour; when "Al hamd ulillah!" (praise be to God!) pronounced in a slow and composed tone, proclaimed we were in smooth water. I rallied my friend * on the little composure he showed on this occasion; but he defended himself stoutly, saying, he always prayed twice as much at sea as on shore. This I be-

* It is with great regret I state that the witty and accomplished Khan Sahib, like many others mentioned in these pages, has paid the debt of nature. He continued in India as in Persia to accompany his friend the Elchee till 1821, when he fell a victim to the cholera.

lieve ; but he is on shore even an indifferent observer of the rites of his religion, and is suspected by some of the orthodox of our party of being a Sooffee, or philosophical Deist, which seems to me a general name, that includes all, from the saint who raves about divine love, to the sinner who scoffs at the rites of the worship of his country.

The next personage is Jaffier Ali Khan, brother to the Nabob of Masulipatam. This Indian Mahomedan is a man high in rank though of limited income, and has been from boyhood an intimate friend of the Elchee. Having married into a Persian family, he now resides at Shiraz, where he has been for some time employed as an agent. Jaffier Ali is a tolerable English scholar, but writes that language with more facility than correctness. He was, in his earlier years, extravagant from love of dissipation, and is now imprudent from irresolution. He has acquired a good deal of knowledge, but wants firmness of judgment. The consequence is, that both in conducting his own affairs and those of others, he becomes the dupe of rogues, with whom such a character is sure always to be surrounded. Nevertheless there

is such a redeeming simplicity of manner, and such kindness of heart, about poor Jaffier Ali, that it is impossible for any one to keep up that indignation which his folly often produces. "My friend is not the honest man I thought him," said he one day to me, speaking of a fellow who had duped him; "I have been more foolish than I could have believed, but I will take care another time: yet," he added, with a sympathy for his own weakness, "it is very difficult to deal with these Persians, they are so pleasing in their speech and manner, and most of all when they have cheating intentions."

Mahomed Hoosein, who is also an Indian, has served the Elchee as Moonshee, or instructor in the Persian language, since the latter was an ensign of eighteen, and has gradually risen with his master, whose confidence he enjoys and merits. He is a modest man, speaks little, but always to the purpose. It is not the habit of the Elchee to bring any man in his station prominently forward, and this practice appears exactly to suit the character of the Moonshee, which it has perhaps formed. He never goes to the Elchee but when he is sent for, and never stays when not wanted; is pleased with

any mark of flattering attention, but never appears, like others, to make that his object. With this happy temper, and an honesty that has stood the test of great temptation for more than twenty years, he passes a comparatively still life, amidst all the bustle with which he is surrounded. When not busy writing letters he is employed reading some Persian book, chiefly works on the theological disputes between the Soonees and the Sheas. He holds the tenets of the former; and, with all due reverence to Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet, he thinks, with the Turks and Arabs, that Abubeker, Omar, and Osman, were true men and good Caliphs, and not as the Persians, in their enthusiasm for Ali, term them, base caitiffs and vile usurpers. The Moonshee said to me one day, when I was joking him on his studies, "I do not want to dispute with these red-headed * doctors, but I must fortify myself in my own belief;" and he added, in a low tone of voice, "How can the faith of men be right,

* Kezzelbash, or red-headed, is the appellation by which the Persians are known over Asia. It is said to have arisen from their wearing red cloth tops to their black lambs'-wool caps.

whose practice is so wrong? Did you ever see or hear such a set of swaggerers and storytellers? I rejoice my master has seen so much of them; he will think better than he has ever yet done of us poor Indians."

The next person with whom I must make my readers acquainted is Meerza Aga Meer; he is a Syed, that is one of the tribe of Mahomed, and enjoys great respect among his countrymen, from being a lineal descendant of a holy man, the Ameer Hemza, whose tomb is at Shiraz, and is esteemed one of the most sacred shrines of that city. Aga Meer is a fine penman, and an uncommonly good writer of letters, which is his occupation. He is of mild and unassuming manners, slow in word and action; his even temper and good sense appear always directed to the object of keeping himself clear of all taint from the scene of cupidity and intrigue in which all around him are engaged. The very opposite of the generality of his countrymen, he endeavours to shun all employment not in his own line; and, though a great favourite with the Elchee, he takes nothing on himself, and will, indeed, do nothing without a specific order. Aga Meer is sometimes ashamed of his country-

men ; but he is usually satisfied with showing his feeling by a shrug of his shoulders, and sometimes by averting his head, and is evidently disinclined to inform against or condemn them, when he can avoid such a course without a breach of duty ; but whenever duty is in question, this good and honest man is firm and temperate in its fulfilment.

I have before mentioned Khojah Arratoon, the Armenian treasurer. This sensible and honest man has the characteristic reserve of his tribe, who, from living in a country where they are subject to oppression, become, from early habit, most guarded in their words and actions. This good man is fond of a joke, but he whispers it to you as if it was a state secret. We call him, as I have stated, Blue-beard, from the circumstance of this dye being one day predominant in the colour he had given to this ornament of his face, of the size and form of which he is, and not without reason, proud. He told me his vanity was once not a little flattered by the abuse of a Persian, who after exhausting all other topics, concluded by saying, “ And then what business has a dog of an unbeliever like you with such a beard ? ”

The most prominent among the lower servants is old Hajee Hoosein, the head of the personal attendants; he assumes a superiority over his fellow-servants on the ground of his having visited foreign countries; and he boasts that from every one of them he has brought away some advantage or attainment. He has added to a taste for poetry and the marvellous (which he tells me was born with him in Persia) a love of antiquities, acquired at Bagdad—a knowledge of Arab horses, picked up at Bussorah—skill in traffic in small wares, learnt at Muscat—some theology, and the holy and useful name of Hajee, or Pilgrim, gained by a visit to the Prophet's Tomb at Mecca; and a small but profitable acquaintance with the machinery of clocks and watches, obtained by a short apprenticeship with an eminent horologist at Calcutta. This travelled and very accomplished person, though he condescends to hand the Elchee his Kellian, and to distribute coffee to visitors, is in great request throughout our camp, and with none more than me; and I am rather flattered by the partiality he shows for my society, owing, I suspect, to my having early declared my admiration of his various talents, and in particular of his skill as a

watchmaker, on his having succeeded in making an old watch of mine, that had stopped for a twelvemonth, go for nearly one whole day.

The above personages are our principal characters ; minor gentlemen will speak for themselves when they come upon the stage.

Besides these attached to our camp, we have numbers who, from frequent visits and dealings, are almost considered as belonging to it. But our mode of proceeding is now understood, and the Elchee is not compelled, as he was on his first mission, to guard against attempts of individuals to establish an exclusive influence. Two of these, made by very opposite characters, deserve to be recorded.

The first was a specious young man of some ability, whose name was Hajee Abd-ool-Hameed, who came from Shiraz with a complimentary letter from the minister, Cherâgh Ali Khan, to whom he had promised to discover the real object of the Mission, while to others he had professed his intention of making himself the sole medium of communication and intercourse between the English Representative and the Persian government.

He pursued his design with some address ;

but the Elchee seeing him linger at Abusheher, and very assiduous in his court, suspected his motives, and one day plainly asked him, whether he had any further business, or entertained any expectations of employment? Though at first disconcerted by these direct queries, he confessed he had no business except that of recommending himself; and he then represented how impossible it would be to carry on any concerns in Persia without a qualified native as an agent, stating at the same time that he himself was exactly the man required.

The Elchee thanked him for his kind intentions, but informed him that such assistance was not at that moment necessary. If ever it was, he assured Abd-ool-Hameed, his disinterestedness, in coming so far to afford it, should not be forgotten. The manner more than the substance of this observation was death to the cherished hopes of the Persian expectant. Two days afterwards he left the camp and returned to Shiraz, where he became actively hostile to the Mission, considering himself, by a selfish but common perversion of human reasoning, not merely slighted, but robbed of all the benefits he had anticipated.

The rejection of this gentleman's services no doubt prevented many speculators for favour making the efforts they might have intended. But we learned from Shiraz, that Aga Ibrahim, a native of Cazveen, who had been long settled as a merchant at Shiraz, and was a candidate for the contract for making up tents and other articles wanted for our outfit, ridiculed Abdool-Hameed and his plan, and boasted that he would show them all the way to win a Faringee Elchee.

The intelligence of his intentions, which was written by the Moonshee, Mahomed Hoosein, who had been sent in advance with letters to the Prince Regent of Fars and the King, made us anxious to see this formidable personage. When we were a stage from Desht-e-Arjun he made his appearance. He seemed a merry open-hearted fellow, and, according to his own communications, fond of the good things of this world. He was not over-scrupulous, he said, as to a glass or two of good liquor, and he boasted of having been a boon companion of the King, when his Majesty was Prince Regent at Shiraz, before dread of his uncle, Aga Mahomed and the Moollahs, made him publicly renounce his

wicked ways, and march round the city to break all the vessels which contained wine, in order that young and old should be aware of the sincere repentance of the Heir Apparent of the throne of Persia.

“ I had no uncle with a crown on his head,” said Aga Ibrahim. “ I care nothing for Priests, and have never yet felt the slightest disposition to alter my ways, except when the liquor was bad ; but I take care,” said he, with a significant nod to the Elchee, “ to have it always of the best.”

This conversation occurred during the day. In the evening, Aga Ibrahim desired a private interview with the Elchee, and after being some time with him, he returned to our party evidently disappointed. We soon discovered the reason : he had caused two loaded camels to be taken to the Elchee's tent by a back road, and, after a short preamble, had begged he would accept of both, with their burdens, as a “ paish-kesh, or first-offering.” One of the camels was loaded with Russian brandy, and the panniers which the other carried were (according to his report) two young and beautiful female Georgian slaves ! The liquor and the

ladies had both been politely declined, with many thanks for his intended kindness.

Our friend, Aga Ibrahim, was a very different character from Abd-ool-Hameed. A few glasses of wine which we gave him restored his spirits. "My plan was a good one," he said, "and would, I thought, have won the heart of any Faringee. This Elchee must have some deep designs on Persia, or he could never have resisted such temptations."

Aga Ibrahim had been a great trafficker in the slaves, male and female, which the army of Aga Mahomed brought from Georgia in his irruption into that country in 1797. He had retained one in his own family, of whom he appeared dotingly fond. The more wine he took, the more he spoke of his favourite Mariamne. "I have often," said he, "offered to marry her, if she would only become a Mahomedan, but all in vain; and really, when she is on her knees praying before her cross, or chanting hymns to the Virgin Mary, she looks so beautiful, and sings so sweetly, that I have twenty times been tempted to turn Christian myself. Besides, I can hardly think of Paradise as delightful without Mariamne!"

Our jolly good-natured friend went back to Shiraz next day with his camels, neither out of humour with us nor himself. He had failed, it was true, but he remained satisfied that it was some mysterious cause, against which human wisdom could not provide, that had defeated his excellent scheme for gaining the heart of a Faringee Elchee.

Aga Ibrahim was consoled for his first disappointment, by having a good share of the employment he desired, and, in all his dealings, he was found as honest as other Persian merchants.

CHAPTER IX.

IMPORTANCE OF FORMS—DESCRIPTION OF THOSE USED AT VISITS IN PERSIA—DIFFICULTIES ON THIS SUBJECT—HAPPY TERMINATION OF A BATTLE OF CEREMONIES BETWEEN THE FIRST MISSION AND THE PETTY COURT OF SHIRAZ—PERSIAN SOCIETY—FABLES AND APOLOGUES.

WHEN we arrived at the garden of Shah Chêrâgh, within a few miles of the city of Shiraz, a halt was ordered for the purpose of settling the forms of our reception. These were easily arranged, as the Elchee, though his military rank, from the period of his first mission to the present, had advanced from that of Captain to General, claimed only the same respect and attention he had before insisted upon as the representative of a great and powerful government.

Ceremonies and forms have, and merit, consideration in all countries, but particularly among Asiatic nations. With these the intercourse of private as well as public life is much regulated by their observance. From the spirit and decision of a public Envoy upon such points,

the Persians very generally form their opinion of the character of the country he represents. This fact I had read in books, and all I saw convinced me of its truth. Fortunately the Elchee had resided at some of the principal courts of India, whose usages are very similar. He was, therefore, deeply versed in that important science denominated “Kâida-e-nishest-oo-berkhâst” (or the art of sitting and rising), in which is included a knowledge of the forms and manners of good society, and particularly those of Asiatic kings and their courts.

He was quite aware, on his first arrival in Persia, of the consequence of every step he took on such delicate points; he was, therefore, anxious to fight all his battles regarding ceremonies before he came near the footstool of royalty. We were consequently plagued, from the moment we landed at Abusheher, till we reached Shiraz, with daily, almost hourly drilling, that we might be perfect in our demeanour at all places, and under all circumstances. We were carefully instructed where to ride in a procession, where to stand or sit within-doors, when to rise from our seats, how far to advance to meet a visitor, and to what part of the tent or house

we were to follow him when he departed, if he was of sufficient rank to make us stir a step.

The regulations of our risings and standings, and movings and reseatings, were, however, of comparatively less importance than the time and manner of smoking our Kelliâns and taking our coffee. It is quite astonishing how much depends upon coffee and tobacco in Persia. Men are gratified or offended, according to the mode in which these favourite refreshments are offered. You welcome a visitor, or send him off, by the way in which you call for a pipe or a cup of coffee. Then you mark, in the most minute manner, every shade of attention and consideration, by the mode in which he is treated. If he be above you, you present these refreshments yourself, and do not partake till commanded: if equal, you exchange pipes, and present him with coffee, taking the next cup yourself: if a little below you, and you wish to pay him attention, you leave him to smoke his own pipe, but the servant gives him, according to your condescending nod, the first cup of coffee: if much inferior, you keep your distance and maintain your rank, by taking the first cup of coffee yourself, and

then directing the servant, by a wave of the hand, to help the guest.

When a visitor arrives, the coffee and pipe are called for to welcome him; a second call for these articles announces that he may depart; but this part of the ceremony varies according to the relative rank or intimacy of the parties.

These matters may appear light to those with whom observances of this character are habits, not rules; but in this country they are of primary consideration, a man's importance with himself and with others depending on them.

From the hour the first mission reached Persia, servants, merchants, governors of towns, chiefs, and high public officers, presuming upon our ignorance, made constant attempts to trespass upon our dignity, and though repelled at all points, they continued their efforts, till a battle royal at Shiraz put the question to rest, by establishing our reputation, as to a just sense of our own pretensions, upon a basis which was never afterwards shaken. But this memorable event merits a particular description.

The first mission arrived at Shiraz on the 13th of June, 1800. The King of Persia was at this

time in Khorassan, and the province of Fars, of which Shiraz is the capital, was nominally ruled by one of his sons, called Hoosein Ali Meerzâ, a boy of twelve years of age. He was under the tuition of his mother, a clever woman, and a Minister called Cherâgh Ali Khan. With the latter redoubtable personage there had been many fights upon minor ceremonies, but all were merged in a consideration of those forms which were to be observed on our visit to the young Prince.

According to Persian usage, Hoosein Ali Meerzâ was seated on a Nemmed, or thick felt, which was laid on the carpet, and went half across the upper end of the room in which he received the Mission. Two slips of felt, lower by two or three inches than that of the Prince, extended down each side of the apartment. On one of these sat the Ministers and Nobles of the petty Court, while the other was allotted to the Elchee and Suite; but according to a written "Destoor-ool-Amal," (or program) to which a plan of the apartment was annexed, the Elchee was not only to sit at the top of our slip, but his right thigh was to rest on the Prince's Nemmed.

The Elchee, on entering this apartment, saluted

the Prince, and then walked up to his appointed seat; but the master of the ceremonies* pointed to one lower, and on seeing the Elchee took no notice of his signal, he interposed his person between him and the place stated in the program. Here he kept his position, fixed as a statue, and in his turn paid no attention to the Elchee, who waved his hand for him to go on one side. This was the crisis of the battle. The Elchee looked to the Minister; but he stood mute, with his hands crossed before his body, looking down on the carpet. The young Prince, who had hitherto been as silent and dignified as the others, now requested the Elchee to be seated; which the latter, making a low bow to him, and looking with no slight indignation at the Minister, complied with. Coffee and pipes were handed round; but as soon as that ceremony was over, and before the second course of refreshments were called for, the Elchee requested the Prince to give him leave to depart; and, without waiting a reply, arose and retired.

The Minister seeing matters were wrong, and being repulsed in an advance he made to an explanation, sent Mahomed Shereef Khan, the

* Ashkakas Bâshee.

Mehmandar, to speak to the Elchee; but he was told to return, and tell Cherâgh Ali Khan “That the British Representative would not wait at Shiraz to receive a second insult. Say to him,” he added, “that regard for the King, who is absent from his dominions, prevented my showing disrespect to his son, who is a mere child; I therefore seated myself for a moment; but I have no such consideration for his Minister, who has shown himself alike ignorant of what is due to the honour of his sovereign and his country, by breaking his agreement with a foreign Envoy.”

The Elchee mounted his horse, after delivering this message, which he did in a loud and indignant tone, and rode away apparently in a great rage. It was amusing to see the confusion to which his strong sense of the indignity put upon him threw those, who a moment before were pluming themselves on the clever manner by which they had compelled him to seat himself fully two feet lower on the carpet than he had bargained for. Meerzâs and Om-râhs came galloping one after another, praying different persons of his suite to try and pacify him. The latter shook their heads; but those

who solicited them appeared to indulge hopes, till they heard the orders given for the immediate movement of the English camp. All was then dismay; message after message was brought deprecating the Elchee's wrath. He was accused of giving too much importance to a trifle; it was a mistake of my lord of the ceremonies; would his disgrace—his punishment—the bastinado—putting his eyes out—cutting off his head, satisfy or gratify the offended Elchee?—To all such evasions and propositions the Envoy returned but one answer:—"Let Cherâgh Ali Khan write an acknowledgment that he has broken his agreement, and that he entreats my forgiveness: if such a paper is brought me, I remain; if not, I march from Shiraz."

Every effort was tried in vain to alter this resolution, and the Minister, seeing no escape, at last gave way, and sent the required apology, adding, if ever it reached his Majesty's ear that the Elchee was offended, no punishment would be deemed too severe for those who had ruffled his Excellency's temper or hurt his feelings.

The reply was, the explanation was ample and satisfactory, and that the Elchee would not for worlds be the cause of injury to the meanest

person in Persia, much less to his dear friend Cherâgh Ali Khan; and a sentence was added to this letter by particular desire of Meerzâ Aga Meer, who penned it, stating, "That every thing disagreeable was erased from the tablet of the Elchee's memory, on which nothing was now written but the golden letters of amity and concord."

The day after this affair was settled, the Minister paid the Elchee a long visit, and insisted upon his going again to see the Prince. We went—but what a difference in our reception: all parties were attentive; the master of the ceremonies bent almost to the ground; and though the Elchee only desired to take his appointed seat, that would neither satisfy the Prince nor the Minister, who insisted that, instead of his placing one thigh on the Nemmed, which was before unapproachable, he should sit altogether on its edge! This was "miherbânee, ser-afrâzee," (favour, exaltation) and we were all favoured and exalted.

Such is the history of this battle of ceremony, which was the only one of any consequence there was occasion to fight in Persia; for in wars of this kind, as in other wars, if you once esta-

blish your fame for skill and courage, victory follows as a matter of course.

It must not be supposed from what has been stated, that the Persians are all grave formal persons. They are the most cheerful people in the world; and they delight in familiar conversation; and every sort of recreation appears, like that of children, increased by those occasional restraints to which their customs condemn them. They contrive every means to add to the pleasures of their social hours; and as far as society can be agreeable, divested of its chief ornament, females, it is to be met with in this country. Princes, chiefs, and officers of state, while they pride themselves, and with justice, on their superior manners, use their utmost efforts to make themselves pleasant companions. Poets, historians, astrologers, wits, and reciters of stories and fables, who have acquired eminence, are not only admitted into the first circles, but honoured. It is not uncommon to see a nobleman of high rank give precedence to a man of wit or of letters, who is expected to amuse or instruct the company; and the latter, confident in those acquirements to which he

owes his distinction, shows, by his manner and observations, that usage has given him a right to the place he occupies.

I heard, before I mixed in it, very different accounts of Persian society. With one class of persons it was an infliction, to another a delight. I soon found that its enjoyment depended upon a certain preparation; and from the moment I landed in the country, I devoted a portion of my time to their most popular works in verse and prose. I made translations, not only of history and poetry, but of fables and tales, being satisfied that this occupation, while it improved me in the knowledge of the language, gave me a better idea of the manners and mode of thinking of this people than I could derive from any other source. Besides, it is a species of literature with which almost every man in Persia is acquainted; and allusions to works of fancy and fiction are so common in conversation, that you can never enjoy their society if ignorant of such familiar topics.

I have formerly alluded to the cause which leads all ranks in Persia to blend fables and apologues in their discourse, but this subject merits a more particular notice. There has

been a serious and protracted discussion among the learned in Europe as to the original country of those tales which have delighted and continue to delight successive generations. One or two facts connected with this abstruse question are admitted by all.—First, that the said tales are not the native produce of our western clime. They are decidedly exotics, though we have improved upon the original stock by careful culture, by grafting, and other expedients, so as to render them more suited to the soil into which they have been transplanted.

The next admission is, that some of our best fables and tales came with the Sun from the East, that genial clime, where Nature pours forth her stores with so liberal a hand that she spoils by her indulgence those on whom she bestows her choicest gifts. In that favoured land the imagination of authors grows and flourishes, like their own evergreens, in unpruned luxuriance. This exuberance is condemned by the fastidious critics of the West. As for myself, though an admirer of art, I like to contemplate Nature in all her forms; and it is amidst her varied scenes that I have observed how much man takes his shape and pursuits

from the character of the land in which he is born. Our admirable and philosophic poet, after asserting the command which the uncircumscribed soul, when it chooses to exert itself, has over both the frigid and torrid zones, beautifully and truly adds—

“ Not but the human fabric from its birth
Imbibes a flavour of its parent earth;
As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of the soil.”

The warmth of the climate of the East, the ever-teeming abundance of the earth, while it fosters lively imaginations and strong passions, disposes the frame to the enjoyment of that luxurious ease which is adverse to freedom. That noblest of all plants which ever flourished on earth has, from the creation to the present day, been unknown in the East. This being the case, the fathers of families, the chiefs of tribes, and the sovereigns of kingdoms, are, within their separate circles, alike despotic; their children, followers, and subjects are consequently compelled to address these dreaded superiors in apologues, parables, fables, and tales, lest the

plain truth, spoken in plain language, should offend; and the person who made a complaint or offered advice should receive the bastinado, or have his head struck off on the first impulse of passion, and before his mighty master had time to reflect on the reasonableness of such prompt punishment.

To avoid such unpleasant results, every bird that flies, every beast that walks, and even fish that swim, have received the gift of speech, and have been made to represent kings, queens, ministers, courtiers, soldiers, wise men, foolish men, old women, and little children, in order, as a Persian author says, “That the ear of authority may be safely approached by the tongue of wisdom.”

There is another reason why tales and fables continue so popular in the East; we observe how pleasing and useful they are as a medium of conveying instruction in childhood: a great proportion of the men and women of the countries of which we speak are, in point of general knowledge, but children; and while they learn, through allegories and apologues, interspersed with maxims, to appreciate the merits of their

superiors, the latter are, in their turn, taught by the same means lessons of humanity, generosity, and justice.

“Have you no laws,” said I one day to Aga Meer, “but the Koran, and the traditions upon that volume?” “We have,” said he, gravely, “the maxims of Sâdee.” Were I to judge from my own observations, I should say, that these stories and maxims, which are known to all, from the king to the peasant, have fully as great an effect in restraining the arbitrary and unjust exercise of power as the laws of the Prophet.

It is through allegories and fables that we receive the earliest accounts we have of all nations, but particularly those of the Eastern hemisphere. We may, in these days in which exactness is so much valued, deplore this medium as liable to mislead; but must recollect, that if we had not their ancient records in this form we should have them in none. One of the wisest men in the West, Francis Bacon, has truly said, “Fiction gives to mankind what history denies, and in some measure satisfies the mind with shadows when it cannot enjoy the substance.”

Those who rank highest amongst the Eastern nations for genius have employed their talents in works of fiction ; and they have added to the moral lessons they desired to convey so much of grace and ornament, that their volumes have found currency in every nation of the world. The great influx of them into Europe may be dated from the crusades ; and if that quarter of the globe derived no other benefits from these holy wars, the enthusiastic admirers of such narrations may consider the tales of Boccaccio and similar works as sufficient to compensate all the blood and treasure expended in that memorable contest !

England has benefited largely from these tales of the East. Amongst other boons from that land of imagination, we have the groundwork on which Shakspeare has founded his inimitable play of the Merchant of Venice.

The story of the Mahomedan and the Jew has been found in several books of Eastern Tales. In one Persian version love is made to mix with avarice in the breast of the Israelite, who had cast the eye of desire upon the wife of the Mahomedan, and expected, when he came to exact

his bond, the lady would make any sacrifice to save her husband.

At the close of this tale, when the parties come before the judge, the Jew puts forth his claim to the forfeited security of a pound of flesh. "How answerest thou?" said the judge, turning to the Mahomedan. "It is so," replied the latter; "the money is due by me, but I am unable to pay it." "Then," continued the judge, "since thou hast failed in payment, thou must give the pledge; go, bring a sharp knife." When that was brought, the judge turned to the Jew, and said, "Arise, and separate one pound of flesh from his body, so that there be not a grain more or less; for if there is, the governor shall be informed, and thou shalt be put to death." "I cannot," said the Jew, "cut off one pound exactly; there will be a little more or less." But the judge persisted that it should be the precise weight. On this the Jew said he would give up his claim and depart. This was not allowed, and the Jew being compelled to take his bond with all its hazards, or pay a fine for a vexatious prosecution, he preferred the latter, and returned home, a disappointed usurer.

Admitting that the inhabitants of Europe received these tales and apologues from the Saracens, the next question is, where did they get them? Mahomed and his immediate successors, while they proscribed all such false and wicked lies and inventions, accuse the Persians of being the possessors and propagators of those delusive tales, which were, according to them, preferred by many of their followers to the Koran. But in the course of time Caliphs became less rigid. The taste for poetry and fiction revived, and Persian stories and Arabian tales deluged the land.

For some centuries the above countries were the supposed sources of this branch of literature, but, since the sacred language of the Hindus has become more generally known, the Persians are discovered to have been not only the plunderers of their real goods and chattels, but also of their works of imagination. These we, in our ignorance, long believed to belong to the nations from whom we obtained them; but now that Orientalists abound, who are deeply read in Sanscrit, Prâcrit, Marhatta, Guzerattee, Canarese, Syamese, Chinese, Talingana, Tamil, and a hundred other languages, unknown to our ig-

norant ancestors, the said Persians and Arabians have been tried and convicted, not only of robbing the poor Hindus of their tales and fables, but of an attempt to disguise their plagiarisms, by the alteration of names, and by introducing, in place of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon, the magi, and all the spirits of the Heaven and the Earth, which peculiarly belong to the followers of Zoroaster.

Nothing, however, can impose upon the present enlightened age, and our antiquaries have long been and are still occupied in detecting thefts committed twenty centuries ago. In spite of the Persian and Arabian cloaks in which tales and fables have been enveloped, the trace of their Hindu origin has been discovered in the various customs and usages referred to, and it has been decided that almost all the ancient tales are taken from the *Hitôpadêsa*, and that still more famous work, the *Pancha-Tantra*, or more properly the *Panchôpâkhyân*, or *Five Tales*; while many of the more modern are stolen from the *Kathâ-Sarit-Sâgar*, or *Ocean of the Stream of Narration*, a well known work, which was compiled about the middle of the twelfth cen-

tury, by order of that equally well known Prince Sree Hertha of Cashmere!

I have sometimes had doubts whether it was quite fair to rake up the ashes of the long-departed Pehlevee writers; more particularly as there does not now exist one solitary book in their language which we could compare with the Hindu MSS., of which we have lately become enamoured; but reverence for the learning of those who have decided this question, and dread of their hard words, with the very spelling of which I am always puzzled, has kept me silent. As I am, however, rather partial to my Persian friends, I must vindicate them from this general charge of robbery and fraud. They certainly acquired one of their most celebrated works of imagination from India, under circumstances that do equal honour to the just king Noosheerwân, his wise minister Boozoorchimihr, and the learned doctor Barzooyeh.

The work to which I refer is the Kartaka-Damnaka of the Brahmins, the Kalîla-wa-Damna of the Arabians, and the Fables of Pilpay of Europe. This book, originally written in the Sanscrit, was first translated into Pehlevee, from

that into Arabic, and next into Persian. So many learned Oriental critics, French and English, have given the names and dates of the translations, that I shall not repeat them, but give a short account of the first introduction of these famous fables into Persia, with some facts of the life and opinions of the wise and disinterested man through whose efforts his native country became possessed of this treasure.

Noosheerwân, deservedly styled the Just, who governed Persia in the beginning of the seventh century, hearing of the fame of a work which a Brahmin of Ceylon had composed, employed the celebrated physician named Barzooyeh to obtain for him a copy of this production. This was a delicate and hazardous enterprise, for the work, ever since the reign of a certain Indian King, named Dabshileem, for whom it was written, had been guarded with great care and jealousy, lest the profane should learn the wisdom that ought only to appertain to the wise and holy.

Barzooyeh, confident in knowledge and strong in allegiance, undertook to fulfil the commands of his sovereign. He proceeded towards India, furnished with money and every thing that could forward the objects of his journey. When he

arrived at the Indian capital, he pretended that the motive which induced him to visit it was the improvement of his mind, by communication with the wise men for which it was at that period renowned. Amongst those whose society he courted, he early discovered one Brahmin, who appeared to him the very model of wisdom. His efforts were directed to gain his friendship, and believing he had succeeded, he resolved to intrust him with his real design.

“ I have a secret to confide to you,” said he, one day to his friend ; “ and you know, ‘ a sign to the wise is enough.’ ” “ I know what you mean,” said the penetrating Brahmin, “ without your sign ; you came to rob us of our knowledge, that you might with it enrich Persia. Your purpose is deceit ; but you have conducted yourself with such consummate address and ability that I cannot help entertaining a regard for you. I have,” continued the Indian, “ observed in you the eight qualities which must combine to form a perfect man : forbearance, self-knowledge, true allegiance, judgment in placing confidence, secrecy, power to obtain respect at court, self-command, and a reserve, both as to speech in general society and intermed-

dling with the affairs of others. Now you have those qualities, and though your object in seeking my friendship is not pure but interested, nevertheless I have such an esteem for you that I will incur all hazards to forward your object of stealing our wisdom."

The Brahmin obtained the far-sought book, and by his aid and connivance a copy was soon completed. Noosheerwân, who had been informed of the success of his literary envoy, was impatient for his return; and when he arrived at the frontier, he was met by some of the most favoured courtiers sent by the monarch to conduct him to the capital. He was welcomed with joy, particularly by Noosheerwân; a great court was held, at which all who were dignified or learned in the kingdom were present. Barzooyeh was commanded to read from the volume he had brought: he did so; and the admiration of its contents was universal.

"Open my treasury!" said the grateful Noosheerwân; "and let the man who has conferred such a benefit on his country enter, and take what he finds most valuable." "I desire neither jewels nor precious metals," said Barzooyeh; "I have laboured not for them but for the favour of my

Sovereign ; and that I have succeeded is rather to be referred to his auspices, than to my humble efforts. But I have," said he, " a request to make : the King has directed his able minister, Boozeorchimihr, to translate this work into Pehlevee ; let him be further instructed that mention be made of me in some part of the book, and that he particularly specify my family, my profession, and my faith. Let all this be written, so that my name may go down to future ages, and the fame of my Sovereign be spread throughout the world."

The King was delighted with this further proof of the elevated mind of Barzooyeh ; all present applauded his perfect wisdom, and joined in supplicating that his request might be granted.

Noosheerwân, addressing the assembly, said—
" You have witnessed the noble disinterestedness of this man, you know how faithfully he has discharged his duty, and what difficulties and dangers he has encountered and overcome in my service. I desired to enrich him with jewels and money, but such rewards have no value in his mind, his generous heart is above them ; he has only asked that his name shall have a separate mention, and that his life up to this date shall

be faithfully written. Let it," said the Monarch, turning to Boozoorchimihr, "have a place at the very commencement of that book of wisdom which he has procured for his country."

The above is the substance of the story, as given in the Persian translation of this work, made by Aboo'l-Fazl, and called Eiyâr-e-Dânish, or the Touchstone of Wisdom ; and we have in the same volume some particulars of the religious tenets, or rather doubts, of the philosophic Bar-zooyeh, which merit a short mention.

The wise doctor, who is made to speak in his own person, expresses himself to this effect :—
"The questions regarding the attributes of the Creator, and the nature of futurity, have been sources of never-ending doubt and discussion. Every one deems his own opinions regarding these important subjects as the only true ones, and his life is wasted in efforts to raise his own sect and to disparage others ; but how many of these persons are mere self-worshippers, in whom there is not a trace of real religion, or of the knowledge of God !

"How deeply do I regret that time which I myself lost in pursuit of these vain imaginations, searching every path, but never finding the true

way, and never even discovering a guide. I have consulted the wise and learned of all religions as to the origin of that faith in which they believed ; but I have found them only busied with propping up their own notions, and trying to upset those of others.

“ At last finding no medicine for the sickness of my heart, and no balm for the wounds of my soul, I came to a conclusion, that the foundation of all these sects was self-conceit. I had heard nothing that a wise man could approve ; and I thought that if I gave my faith to their creed, I should be as foolish as the poor thief who, by an unmeaning word, was deluded to his destruction.

“ Some thieves mounted to the top of a rich man’s house ; but he, hearing their footsteps, and guessing their object, waked his wife, to whom he whispered what had occurred. ‘ I shall feign sleep,’ said he to her ; ‘ do you pretend to awake me, and commence a conversation, in a tone loud enough to be heard by the thieves. Demand of me with great earnestness how I amassed my wealth ; and, notwithstanding my refusal, urge me to a confession.’

“ The woman did as she was desired, but the

husband replied, ‘Do forbear such questions; perhaps if I give you true answers somebody may hear, and I may be exposed to disagreeable consequences.’

“This denial to gratify her curiosity only made the lady more earnestly repeat her interrogatories. Apparently wearied with her importunities, the husband said, ‘If I comply with your wishes, it will be contrary to the maxim of the wise, who have said, ‘Never tell a secret to a woman.’”

“‘Who,’ said the irritated lady, ‘do you take me for; am not I the cherished wife of your bosom?’ ‘Well, well,’ said the man, ‘be patient, for God’s sake; as you are my true and confidential friend, I suppose I must tell you all; but never reveal to any one what you shall now hear.’ She made a thousand protestations that his secret should never pass her lips. The husband appearing quite satisfied, proceeded to state as follows :

“‘Learn, my dear wife, that all my wealth is plunder. I was possessed of a mysterious charm, by which, when standing on moonlight nights near the walls of the houses of the rich, I could, by repeating the word Sholim, Sholim, Sholim, seven times, and at the same time lay-

ing my hand on a moonbeam, vault on the terrace; when there, I again exclaimed, Sholim, Sholim, Sholim, seven times, and with the utmost ease jumped down into the house, and again pronouncing Sholim, Sholim, Sholim, seven times, all the riches in the house were brought to my view. I took what I liked best, and for the last time calling out Sholim, Sholim, Sholim, I sprung through the window with my booty; and through the blessing of this charm, I was not only invisible, but preserved from even the suspicion of guilt.

““ This is the mode in which I have accumulated that great wealth with which you are surrounded. But beware and reveal not this secret; let no mortal know it, or the consequences may be fatal to us all.’

“ The robbers, who had anxiously listened to this conversation, treasured up with delight the magic words. Some time afterwards the leader of the band, believing all in the house asleep, and having got upon the window, called out Sholim, Sholim, Sholim, seven times, and springing forward fell headlong into the room. The master of the dwelling, who was awake, expecting this result, instantly seized the fellow, and

began to soften * his shoulders with a cudgel, saying, ‘ Have I all my life been plaguing mankind in acquiring wealth just to enable a fellow like you to tie it up in a bundle and carry it away ; but now tell me who you are ? ’ The thief replied, ‘ I am that senseless blockhead that a breath of yours has consigned to dust. The proverb,’ said the wretched man, ‘ is completely verified in my fate ; ‘ I have spread my carpet for prayer on the surface of the waters.’ But the measure of my misfortune is full ; I have only one request to make, that you now put a handful of earth over me.’

“ In fine,” adds Barzooyeh, “ I came to the conclusion, that if, without better proof than delusive words, I were to follow any of the modes of faith which I have described, my final condition would be no better than that of the fool in this tale, who trusted to Sholim, Sholim, Sholim.

“ I said therefore to my soul, if I run once more after these pursuits, a life would not be sufficient ; my end approaches, and if I continue in the maze of wordly concerns I shall lose that

* This is a literal translation.

opportunity I now possess, and be unprepared for the great journey which awaits me.

“As my desire was righteous, and my search after truth honest, my mind was favoured with the conviction that it was better to devote myself to those actions which all faiths approve, and which all who are wise and good applaud.

“By the blessing of God, after I was released from such a state of distraction, I commenced my efforts; I endeavoured to the utmost of my power to do good, and to cease from causing pain to animals, or injury to men.”

The wise physician adds in this passage a list of all the virtues after which he sought, and all the vices he shunned. This list is long, and appears to me to include the whole catalogue of human virtues and vices. Suffice it here to say, that his biographer assures us that his latter end was blessed, and that he left behind him a name as celebrated for virtue as it was for wisdom.

CHAPTER X.

FABLE OF THE TWO CATS—PREAMBLE TO PERSIAN
TREATY—APOLOGUES FROM SADEE—LETTER FROM
NIZAM-OOL-MOOLK TO MAHOMED SHAH—DEATH
OF YEZDIJIRD.

THE preceding chapter concluded with an episode upon the life and opinions of the favoured physician of Noosheerwân. I must in this return to my subject, the elucidation of the rise and progress of apologues and fables.

It will be admitted by all, that the Persians, in the luxuriance of their imaginations, have embellished wonderfully the less artificial writings of the Hindus. The lowest animal they introduce into a fable speaks a language which would do honour to a king. All nature contributes to adorn the metaphorical sentence; but their perfection in that part of composition called the Ibâret-e-Rengeen, or Florid Style, can only be shown by example, and for that

purpose I have made a literal translation of the fable of the “Two Cats;” from which I suspect we have borrowed ours, of the “Town and Country Mouse.”

“In former days there was an old woman, who lived in a hut more confined than the minds of the ignorant, and more dark than the tombs of misers. Her companion was a cat, from the mirror of whose imagination the appearance of bread had never been reflected, nor had she from friends or strangers ever heard its name. It was enough that she now and then scented a mouse, or observed the print of its feet on the floor; when, blessed by favouring stars, or benignant fortune, one fell into her claws,

‘She became like a beggar who discovers a treasure of gold;
Her cheeks glowed with rapture, and past grief was consumed by present joy*.’

This feast would last for a week or more; and while enjoying it she was wont to exclaim—

* This, with some other verses in the fable, are from Persian poets of celebrity, whose stanzas it is an invariable usage to introduce in such compositions.

‘ Am I, O God! when I contemplate this, in a dream or awake ?

Am I to experience such prosperity after such adversity ?’

“ But as the dwelling of the old woman was in general the mansion of famine to this cat, she was always complaining, and forming extravagant and fanciful schemes. One day, when reduced to extreme weakness, she with much exertion reached the top of the hut ; when there, she observed a cat stalking on the wall of a neighbour’s house, which, like a fierce tiger, advanced with measured steps, and was so loaded with flesh that she could hardly raise her feet. The old woman’s friend was amazed to see one of her own species so fat and sleek, and broke out into the following exclamation :

‘ Your stately strides have brought you here at last ; pray tell me from whence you come ?

From whence have you arrived with so lovely an appearance ?

You look as if from the banquet of the Khan of Khatâi.

Where have you acquired such a comeliness ? and how came you by that glorious strength ?’

The other answered, ‘ I am the Sultan’s crum-

eater. Each morning, when they spread the convivial table, I attend at the palace, and there exhibit my address and courage. From among the rich meats and wheat-cakes I cull a few choice morsels; I then retire and pass my time till next day in delightful indolence.'

"The old dame's cat requested to know what rich meat was, and what taste wheat-cakes had? 'As for me,' she added, in a melancholy tone, 'during my life, I have neither eat nor seen any thing but the old woman's gruel and the flesh of mice.' The other smiling said, 'This accounts for the difficulty I find in distinguishing you from a spider. Your shape and stature is such as must make the whole generation of cats blush; and we must ever feel ashamed while you carry so miserable an appearance abroad.

'You certainly have the ears and tail of a cat,
But in other respects you are a complete spider.'

Were you to see the Sultan's palace, and to smell his delicious viands, most undoubtedly those withered bones would be restored; you would receive new life; you would come from

behind the curtain of invisibility into the plain of observation :

‘ When the perfume of his beloved passes over the tomb of
a lover,

Is it wonderful that his putrid bones should be re-animated ?’

The old woman’s cat addressed the other in the most supplicating manner : ‘ Oh, my sister !’ she exclaimed, ‘ have I not the sacred claims of a neighbour upon you ; are we not linked in the ties of kindred ? what prevents your giving a proof of friendship, by taking me with you when next you visit the palace ? Perhaps from your favour plenty may flow to me, and from your patronage I may attain dignity and honour.

‘ Withdraw not from the friendship of the honourable ;
Abandon not the support of the elect.’

“ The heart of the sultan’s crum-eater was melted by this pathetic address ; she promised her new friend should accompany her on the next visit to the palace. The latter overjoyed went down immediately from the terrace, and

communicated every particular to the old woman, who addressed her with the following counsel:

“ ‘ Be not deceived, my dearest friend, with the worldly language you have listened to; abandon not your corner of content, for the cup of the covetous is only to be filled by the dust of the grave; and the eye of cupidity and hope can only be closed by the needle of mortality and the thread of fate.

‘ It is content that makes men rich;

Mark this, ye avaricious, who traverse the world:

He neither knows nor pays adoration to his God,

Who is dissatisfied with his condition and fortune.’

But the expected feast had taken such possession of poor puss’s imagination that the medicinal counsel of the old woman was thrown away.

‘ The good advice of all the world is like wind in a cage,
Or water in a sieve, when bestowed on the headstrong.’

“ To conclude, next day, accompanied by her companion, the half-starved cat hobbled to the

Sultan's palace. Before this unfortunate wretch came, as it is decreed that the covetous shall be disappointed, an extraordinary event had occurred, and, owing to her evil destiny, the water of disappointment was poured on the flame of her immature ambition. The case was this; a whole legion of cats had, the day before, surrounded the feast, and made so much noise, that they disturbed the guests, and in consequence the Sultan had ordered that some archers, armed with bows from Tartary, should, on this day, be concealed, and that whatever cat advanced into the field of valour, covered with the shield of audacity, should, on eating the first morsel, be overtaken with their arrows. The old dame's puss was not aware of this order. The moment the flavour of the viands reached her, she flew, like an eagle to the place of her prey.

“ Scarcely had the weight of a mouthful been placed in the scale to balance her hunger, when a heart-dividing arrow pierced her breast.

‘ A stream of blood rushed from the wound.

She fled, in dread of death, after having exclaimed,

Should I escape from this terrific archer,

I will be satisfied with my mouse and the miserable hut
of my old mistress.

My soul rejects the honey if accompanied by the sting.
Content, with the most frugal fare, is preferable.'''

This fable is a fair specimen of the style of such compositions; but it is in the *deebâchehs*, or introductions to letters or books, that “The fiery steed of the two-tongued pen” (meaning a split reed) is allowed to run wild amidst the rich pasture of the verdant field of imagination.

A better proof of the latitude taken on such occasions cannot be given, than in the preamble to the treaty concluded by the Elchee on his first mission to Persia, of which the following is a literal translation.

“After the voice is raised to the praise and glory of the God of the world, and the brain is perfumed with the scent of the saints and prophets, to whom be health and glory; whose rare perfections are perpetually chanted by birds* of melodious notes, furnished with two, three, and four pairs of wings; and to the Highest, seated in the heavens, for whom good has been predestinated; and the perfume mixed with musk, which scenteth the celestial mansions of those that sing hymns in the ethereal sphere, and to

* A metaphorical name for angels.

the light of the flame of the Most High, which gives radiant splendour to the collected view of those who dwell in the heavenly regions; the clear meaning of the treaty, which has been established on a solid basis, is fully explained on this page; and as it is fixed as a principle of law, that, in this world of existence and trouble, in this universe of creation and concord, there is no action among those of mankind which tends more to the perfection of the human race, or to answer the end of their being and existence, than that of cementing friendship, and of establishing intercourse, communication, and connexion betwixt each other. The image reflected from the mirror of accomplishment is a tree fruitful and abundant, and one that produces good both now and hereafter. To illustrate the allusions that it has been proper to make, and explain these metaphors, worthy of exposition at this happy period of auspicious aspect, a treaty has been concluded between the high in dignity, the exalted in station, attended by fortune, of great and splendid power, the greatest among the high viziers in whom confidence is placed, the faithful of the powerful government, the adorned with greatness, power, glory, splendour,

and fortune, Hajee Ibrahim Khan ; on being granted leave, and vested with authority from the porte of the high king, whose court is like that of Solomon ; the asylum of the world ; the sign of the power of God ; the jewel in the ring of kings ; the ornament in the cheek of eternal empire ; the grace of the beauty of sovereignty and royalty ; the king of the universe, like Caherman ; the mansion of mercy and justice ; the phoenix of good fortune ; the eminence of never-fading prosperity ; the king powerful as Alexander, who has no equal among the princes, exalted to majesty by the Heavens on this globe ; a shade from the shade of the Most High ; a Khoosroo, whose saddle is the moon, and whose stirrup is the new moon ; a prince of great rank, before whom the sun is concealed. * * * *

* * * * And the high in dignity ; the great and mighty in power ; the ornament of those acquainted with manners ***** ; delegated from the sublime quarter of the high in power seated on a throne ; the asylum of the world ; the chief jewel in the crown of royalty and sovereignty ; the anchor of the vessel of victory and fortune ; the ship on the sea of glory and empire ; the blazing sun in the sky of greatness

and glory ; lord of the countries of England and India ; may God strengthen his territories, and establish his glory and command upon the seas, in the manner explained in his credentials ! which are sealed with the seal of the most powerful, and most glorious, possessing fortune, the origin of rank, splendour, and nobility ; the ornament of the world ; the accomplisher of the works of mankind ; the Governor-General of India !”

This preamble is not less remarkable for its flowery diction than for the art by which it saves the dignity of the king of Persia from the appearance of treating with any one below the rank of a monarch. It is also curious to observe, that after introducing the king of England, how skillfully he is limited to an undisputed sovereignty of the seas, that his power may not clash with that of the mighty Khoosroo of the day, “ whose saddle is the moon, and whose stirrup is the new moon,” in his dominion over the earth !

Speaking on the above subjects to Aga Meer, I asked him if their monarchs were as much delighted with this hyperbolical style as the Meerzas or Secretaries. “ Not at all,” said he : “ the late king, Aga Mahomed, who was remarkable

for his hatred of ornament and show in every form, when his secretaries began with their flattering introductions, used to lose all temper, and exclaim, “To the contents, you scoundrel*.” “Flowery introductions,” said the Meer, “if he had lived long enough, would have gone out of fashion; but the present king prides himself upon being a fine writer both in prose and verse, and the consequence is, as you see in the preamble of this treaty, a composition which I know was honoured by his particular approbation.”

It is but justice to some of the most distinguished Persian authors to add, that there are many exceptions to this redundant style of composition. In the pages of their greatest poets, Firdousee, Nizâmee, Sâdee, and Anwerree, we meet with many passages as remarkable for the beauty and simplicity of the expression, as the truth and elevation of the sentiments; and many of their historians have given us plain narrations of facts, unencumbered with those ornaments and metaphors which are so popular with the generality of their countrymen.

How simply and beautifully has Sâdee de-

* Be-mezmoon Badbakht.

picted the benefit of good society in the following well-known apologue !

“ One day as I was in the bath, a friend of mine put into my hand a piece of scented clay. I took it, and said to it, ‘ Art thou musk or ambergris, for I am charmed with thy perfume ?’ It answered, ‘ I was a despicable piece of clay, but I was some time in the company of the rose ; the sweet quality of my companion was communicated to me, otherwise I should be only a bit of clay, as I appear to be !’ ”

And in another * he has given, with equal force and simplicity, the character of true affection :

“ There was an affectionate and amiable youth who was betrothed to a beautiful girl. I have read, that as they were sailing in the great sea they fell together into a whirlpool : when a mariner went to the young man, that he might catch his hand, and save him from perishing in that unhappy juncture, he called aloud, and pointed to his mistress from the midst of the waves : ‘ Leave me, and save my beloved !’ The

* Both these Apologues have been translated by Sir W. Jones.

whole world admired him for that speech ; and when expiring, he was heard to say—‘ Learn not the tale of love from that wretch who forgets his beloved in the hour of danger.’”

We often meet with Persian letters written in a style at once clear and nervous. Of these there cannot be a better example than that addressed by Nizâm-ool-Moolk, the predecessor of the present Soobâh, or ruler of the Deccan, to Mahomed Shah, the weak and luxurious Emperor of Delhi. This letter, besides the merit of its style, possesses that of conveying a just idea of what Mahomedans conceive to be the duties and pursuits of a good and great monarch, a character which is with them invariably associated with that of a military conqueror.

The following extracts from this well-known production are very literal :

“ It is the duty of princes to see that the laws are strictly obeyed ; that the honour of their subjects be preserved inviolate ; that justice be rendered to all men ; and that loyal nobles and ancient pillars of the state, whose claims to reward are established and acknowledged, be distinguished according to their merits. It is their duty, too, to seek for pleasure in woods and

deserts *; to labour unremittingly in the chastisement of the seditious and refractory; to watch over the rights and happiness of the lower order of their subjects; to shun the society of the mean, and to abstain from all prohibited practices, to the end that none of their people may be able to transgress against the precepts of religion or morality.

“ It is also the duty of princes to be constantly employed in enlarging their dominions, and in encouraging and rewarding their soldiery; it being in the seat of his saddle alone that a king can properly repose. It was in conformity to this opinion the ancestors† of your majesty established it as a domestic rule, that their wives should be delivered on their saddle-cloths, although the moment of child-birth is of all others the one wherein convenience and comfort are

* Alluding to hunting and other field sports.

† The Princes of Tartary. The country we term Tartary is by the Asiatics called Tûrkistan. We have given the name of a small tribe of Moghuls to the whole region inhabited by that and other races, in the same manner as the Oriental nations called Europe Faringastân, or the country of the Franks, because they first became acquainted with the people of France.

most consulted. And they ordained that this usage should invariably be observed by their descendants, to the end that these might never forget the hardy and manly character of their progenitors, or give themselves up to the slothful and enervating luxury of palaces.

“ It is not in the melodious notes of the musician, or the soft tones of the mimic singer, that true and delightful harmony consists; but it is in the clash of arms, the thunder of cannon, and in the piercing sound of the trumpet, which assembles together the ranks in the field of battle. It is not by decking out the charms of a favourite female that power and dominion are to be maintained, but by manfully wielding the sword; nor is it in celebrating the Hoolee* with base eunuchs, that men of real spirit are seen to sprinkle each other with red, but it is in the conflict of heroes with intrepid enemies.

“ It being solely with the view of correcting the errors of your Majesty’s government, and of restoring its ancient splendour, that the meanest of your servants has been moved, by the warmth

* A remarkable festival held in India, to celebrate the commencement of the new year, in which they fling red powder at one another: it commences at the vernal equinox.

of his zeal and attachment, to impart his sentiments to your Majesty, he has made up his mind to the consequences of this well-meant freedom, and will cheerfully submit to his fate ; being in the mean time, however, determined (God willing) to persevere in the design which he has formed, of endeavouring to re-establish the affairs of the empire by every means that may be consistent with his duty and with propriety.”

The affecting death of Yezdijird, the last of the Kaiânian race of kings, affords a fair specimen of that plain and distinct style in which some of the best histories of Persia are written. It is as follows :

“ When the inhabitants of Merv heard that Yezdijird had fled from Persia, and was within their territory, they were anxious to apprehend and destroy him. They accordingly addressed a letter to Tanjtâkh, the King of Tartary, stating, ‘ The King of Persia has fled from the Arabs and taken refuge with us ; we are not inclined to be his adherents, we are more favourably inclined towards you, whose approach we desire, that we may be freed from him, and place ourselves under your protection.’

“ As soon as Tanjtâkh received this letter he

desired to gain possession of Merv, and marched with a considerable army towards that city. Yezdijird, hearing of his near approach, and of the force by which he was accompanied, departed from the Câravânsērâi where he had alighted, at midnight, unattended and undetermined where to go. As he walked straight forward, he saw a light on the side of a stream, to which he directed his footsteps. He found a miller engaged in the labours of his mill, to whom he said, ‘ I am a man in desperate circumstances, and have an enemy whom I have every reason to dread ; afford me an asylum for this one night ; to-morrow I will give you what may make you easy for life.’ The miller replied, ‘ Enter that mill, and remain there.’ Yezdijird went into the mill, and laying sorrow aside, went composedly to sleep. When the miller’s servants observed that he was gone to rest, and entirely off his guard, they armed themselves with clubs, and falling upon him slew him. Having done this they stripped the body of the gold and silver ornaments, the imperial robe, and the crown ; then taking the corpse by the feet, they dragged it along, and threw it into the mill-dam.

“ Next day Tanjtâkh arrived at Merv, and

the inhabitants sought Yezdijird in every direction. By chance the miller being met, was interrogated. He denied having any knowledge of him ; but one of his servants, who was dressed in a woollen garment, having come before them, they, discovering that he smelt strongly of perfume, tore open his garment, and found Yezdijird's imperial robe, scented with ottar and other essences, hid in his bosom. They now examined all the other servants, and found that each had some article secreted about his person ; and after being put to the torture they confessed the whole transaction.

“ Tanjtâkh immediately sent people to search the mill-dam for the body, which they soon found and laid before him. When he saw the corpse of the king he wept bitterly, and ordered it to be embalmed with spices and perfumes ; and he further directed, that after it was wrapt, according to the usage of the Kaiânian monarchs, in a shroud, and placed in a coffin, it should be sent to Persia to be interred in the same place, and with the same ceremonies, as other sovereigns of the race of Kaiân.

“ Tanjtâkh also commanded that the miller and his servants should be put to death.”

What has been said in this chapter, and the examples of the various styles with which my opinions have been illustrated, will satisfy the reader that the mine of Persian literature contains every substance, from the dazzling diamond to the useful granite, and that its materials may be employed with equal success to build castles in the air or upon the earth. My prejudices are, I confess, in favour of the former fabrics, which in the East are constructed with a magnificence unknown to the graver spirits of our Western hemisphere.

CHAPTER XI.

SHIRAZ—SHAIKH-OOL-ISLAM, OR CHIEF JUDGE—
STORY OF ABD-OOL-KADIR—ENTERTAINMENTS—
DERVEESH SEFFER—STORY OF ABDULLA OF
KHORASSAN—PERSIAN POET.

OUR only occupation at Shiraz was feasting, visiting, and giving and receiving presents. The cupidity of the Persians exceeded all bounds, and ministers, courtiers, merchants, wits, and poets, were running a race for the Elchee's favour, which was often accompanied by a watch, a piece of chintz, or of broad-cloth. Their conduct confirmed me in a belief I had imbibed at Abusheher, that all the Persians were crafty and rapacious rogues. I like to decide quickly; it saves trouble; and when once decided, I am particularly averse to believe my judgment is not infallible.

The Envoy had hired, as before noticed, for his Persian secretary, a mild moderate man, who appeared to have both good sense and good

principle : but although some time had elapsed, and I had watched him narrowly without discerning a flaw, I attributed this to his art, and I therefore gave little heed to his reasoning when he used to plead for his countrymen, urging (as he often did), that, from our being strangers, and from our reputation for wealth, generosity, and inexperience, we were naturally exposed to the attacks of the cunning and designing, from whose conduct we drew general inferences, which were not quite fair. “ We are not all so bad as you think us,” the good Aga Meer used to say, with a smile ; “ we have some redeeming characters ; these may be rare, but still they exist ; but that, you English will as yet hardly believe.” He used frequently to mention to me, as one, a relation of his own, the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, or Chief Judge and Priest of Shiraz : “ He was,” he said, “ a person who combined sense and information with piety and humility. He has never come,” added he, “ like these greedy nobles and hungry poets, to prey upon the munificence of the Elchee ; and when the latter, hearing that his sight was weak, sent him a pair of spectacles beautifully mounted in silver, he returned them, requesting a pair

set in common tortoise-shell." Though I heard the account of this paraded humility with a smile, I was very happy to find we were to meet this paragon of modest merit at a breakfast, to which Mahomed Hoosein Khan, the son of the minister Hajee Ibrahim, had invited the Envoy.

The party assembled at the garden of Sâdee, and we were seated near a fountain close to the tomb of the Persian moralist. There was some punctilio in taking our places: but the Elchee, though a stickler for rank with the temporal lords, insisted upon giving the highest seat to the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, who at last consented to take it, observing, the compliment, he felt, was not personal, but meant to his situation as a minister of religion. I sat near, and listened attentively to his conversation, in the hope of detecting the Persian, but was not successful. "You must," he said to the Envoy, "believe me to be void of rational curiosity, and a man who affects humility, because I have not only never been to pay my respects, but when you sent me these costly and beautiful spectacles, I solicited a cheaper and less showy pair. In both instances, however, I acted against my personal inclinations from an imperative sense

of duty. My passion," said the Shaikh, "is to hear the history, the manners, and usages of foreign countries; and where could I have such an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity as in your society? I was particularly pleased with the silver spectacles; the glasses suited my eyes; and others in my house besides myself," said he, smiling, "thought they were very becoming. But I was forced in both cases to practise self-denial. The poor have no shield between them and despotic power, but persons in my condition; and they naturally watch our conduct with great vigilance and jealousy: had I, for my own gratification, visited you, and displayed on my person the proofs of your liberality, they would have thought their judge was like others, and have lost some portion of their confidence in my best efforts to protect them. Besides, ministers and courtiers would have rejoiced in my departure from those rigid rules, the observance of which enables us expounders of the Koran to be some check upon them. These were my motives," concluded the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, "for a conduct which must have seemed almost rude; but you will now understand it, and not condemn me."

The Envoy was evidently delighted with his new friend, and their conversation was protracted for several hours. The Shaikh-ool-Islâm endeavoured to impress him with a favourable opinion of the law of which he was an organ, and illustrated his arguments with anecdotes of religious and learned men, of which I shall give those that struck me as the happiest.

The celebrated Aboo Yûsuf, he said, who was chief judge of Bagdad in the reign of the Caliph Hâdee, was a very remarkable instance of that humility which distinguishes true wisdom. His sense of his own deficiencies often led him to entertain doubts, where men of less knowledge and more presumption were decided. "It is related of this judge," said the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, "that on one occasion, after a very patient investigation of facts, he declared that his knowledge was not competent to decide upon the case before him." "Pray, do you expect," said a pert courtier, who heard this declaration, "that the caliph is to pay your ignorance?" "I do not," was the mild reply; "the caliph pays me, and well, for what I do know; if he were to attempt to pay me for what I do not know, the treasures of his empire would not suffice."

The orthodox Shaikh spoke with more toleration than I expected of the Soofees, who, from the wild and visionary doctrines which they profess, are in general held up by the Mahomedan priests as objects of execration. "There were," he observed, "many good and most exemplary men included in this sect, merely because they were enthusiasts in religion. Besides," said the Shaikh, "both our poets, Hâfiz and Sâdee, but particularly the former, were Soofees; and what native of Shiraz can pass a harsh sentence upon them? We must," he continued, "lament the errors of Soofees in consideration of their virtues; and even in their wildest wanderings they convey the most important lessons—for instance, how simply and beautifully has Abd-ool-Kâdir of Ghilan impressed us with the love of truth in a story of his childhood*."

After stating the vision which made him entreat of his mother to allow him to go to Bagdad and devote himself to God, he thus proceeds. "I informed her of what I had seen, and she wept: then taking out eighty dinars,

* This story is given in the History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 405.

she told me that as I had a brother, half of that was all my inheritance; she made me swear, when she gave it me, never to tell a lie, and afterwards bade me farewell, exclaiming, ‘Go, my son, I consign thee to God; we shall not meet again till the day of judgment.’ I went on well,” he adds, “till I came near to Hamadân, when our kâfillah was plundered by sixty horsemen: one fellow asked me, ‘what I had got?’ ‘Forty dinars,’ said I, ‘are sewed under my garments.’ The fellow laughed, thinking, no doubt, I was joking with him. ‘What have you got?’ said another; I gave him the same answer. When they were dividing the spoil, I was called to an eminence where the chief stood: ‘What property have you got, my little fellow?’ said he. ‘I have told two of your people already,’ I replied, ‘I have forty dinars sewed up carefully in my clothes!’ He ordered them to be ript open, and found my money.—‘And how came you,’ said he, with surprise, ‘to declare so openly, what has been so carefully hidden?’ ‘Because,’ I replied, ‘I will not be false to my mother, to whom I have promised that I will never tell a lie.’ ‘Child,’ said the robber, ‘hast thou such a sense of thy duty to thy mo-

ther at thy years, and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to my God? Give me thy hand, innocent boy,' he continued, 'that I may swear repentance upon it.' He did so—his followers were all alike struck with the scene. 'You have been our leader in guilt,' said they to their chief, 'be the same in the path of virtue;' and they instantly, at his order, made restitution of their spoil, and vowed repentance on my hand."

The Elchee, before this party separated, endeavoured to persuade the high priest to allow him the pleasure of a more frequent intercourse; but his kind invitations were declined in a manner and for reasons which satisfied me I had at least met with one good Persian.

While at Shiraz, we were entertained by the prince, his ministers, and some of the principal inhabitants. A breakfast was given to the Elchee, at a beautiful spot near the Hazâr Bâgh, or thousand gardens, in the vicinity of Shiraz; and we were surprised and delighted to find that we were to enjoy this meal on a stack of roses. On this a carpet was laid, and we sat cross-legged like the natives. The stack, which was as large as a common one of hay in England,

had been formed without much trouble from the heaps or cocks of rose-leaves, collected before they were sent into the city to be distilled. We were told our party was the first to which such a compliment had been paid. Whether this was the case or not, our mount of roses, added to the fine climate, verdant gardens, and clear rills, gave a character of singular luxuriance to this rural banquet.

We were at several evening parties. The dinner given by the minister, Mahomed Nebbee Khan, was the most magnificent. He has been in India; and some English usages, to please and accommodate us, were grafted on the Persian. We went at five o'clock in the evening, and were received in his state hall. In the court-yard, in front of the room in which we sat, were assembled rope-dancers, wrestlers, musicians, lions, bears, and monkeys, all of which exhibited their different feats till sunset; when, after being regaled with coffee, kelliâns, and sweetmeats, we were conducted to another apartment, where we found a dessert of fruit very elegantly laid out in the English style. After sitting in this room for about an hour, we returned to the state hall, which we had no sooner

entered than the fire-works commenced; and though the space where they were exhibited was very confined, they were the best I ever saw. The rockets were let off from a frame which kept them together, and produced a beautiful effect. There was another sort called zembooreh, or swivels, which made a report like a twelve pounder, and added great spirit and effect to this exhibition. After it was over we had a most sumptuous repast of fine pelaws, &c. and iced sherbets.

The day before we left Shiraz, Derveesh Seffer, my old acquaintance, paid the Elchee a visit. This remarkable man, who has charge of the shrines* (including those of Sâdee and Hâfiz) near Shiraz, is esteemed one of the best reciters of poetry and tellers of tales in Persia; and there is no country in the world where more value is placed upon such talents; he who possesses them in an eminent degree is as certain of fortune and fame as the first actors in Europe. Derveesh Seffer, who is honoured by the royal favour, has a very melodious voice, over which he has such power as to be able to

* Tekkeyahs.

imitate every sound, from that of the softest feminine to the harshest masculine voice. The varied expression of his countenance is quite as astonishing as his voice, and his action is remarkably graceful, and always suited to his subject. His memory is not only furnished with an infinite variety of stories, but with all the poetry of his country: this enables him to give interest and effect to the most meagre tale, by apt quotations from the first authors of Persia. Those told by persons like him usually blend religious feeling with entertainment, and are meant to recommend charity; but I cannot better conclude this account of my friend the Derveesh than by giving a tale which he recited to the Envoy, with a view no doubt of impressing him with a belief that worldly success might be promoted by munificence, in any shape, to shrines like those of which he had charge.

The Derveesh having seated himself in a proper position, commenced with a fine passage from the poet Nizâmee in praise of those who, possessing the talent of recitation, give currency and effect to the noble thoughts of departed genius. After a short pause he began his tale.

“ In a sequestered vale of the fruitful province

of Khorassan there lived a peasant called Abdûlla. He had married a person in his own rank of life, who, though very plain in her appearance, had received from her fond father the fine name of Zeebâ, or the beautiful; to which act of parental folly the good woman owed the few seeds of vanity that mixed in her homely character. It was this feeling that led her to name her two children Yûsuph and Fatima, conceiving, no doubt, that the fortunate name of the son of Yâcoob, the vizier of Far'oun, and fascinator of Zûleikhâ*, would aid the boy in his progress through life; while there could be no doubt of her little girl receiving equal advantages from being named after the daughter of the Prophet, and the wife of the renowned Ali.

“ With all these family pretensions from high names, no man's means could be more humble or views more limited than those of Abdûlla; but he was content and happy: he was strong and healthy, and laboured for the reis or squire, who owned the land on which his cottage stood

* The frail wife of Potiphar, according to the Mahomedans.

—he had done so from youth, and had never left, nor ever desired to leave, his native valley. The wages of his labour were paid in grain and cloth, sufficient for the food and clothing of his family and himself; with money he was unacquainted except by name.

“ It happened, however, one day, that the reis was so well pleased with Abdûlla’s exertions that he made him a present of ten piastres. Abdûlla could hardly express his thanks, he was so surprised and overjoyed at this sudden influx of wealth. The moment he could get away from his daily labour he ran home to his wife :— ‘ There, my Zeebâ,’ said he, ‘ there are riches for you !’ and he spread the money before her. The astonishment and delight of the good woman was little less than that of her husband, and the children were called to share in the joy of their parents. ‘ Well,’ said Abdûlla, still looking at the money, ‘ the next thing to consider is what is to be done with this vast sum. The reis has given me to-morrow as a holiday, and I do think, my dear wife, if you approve, I will go to the famous city of Meshed : I never saw it, but it is not above six or seven fersekhs distant. I will pay my devotions at the shrine of the holy

Imâm Mehdee, upon whom be God's blessing, and like a good Mahomedan deposit there two piastres—one-fifth of my wealth—and then I will go to the great bazar, of which I have heard so much, and purchase with the remainder every thing you, my dear wife and children, can wish ; tell me what you would like best.

“ ‘ I will be moderate,’ said Zeebâ ; ‘ I want nothing but a piece of handsome silk for a dress ; I think it would be becoming ;’ and as she said so, all the associations to which her father had given birth when he gave her a name shot across her mind. ‘ Bring me,’ said the sturdy little Yûsuf, ‘ a nice horse and a sword.’ ‘ And me,’ said his sister, in a softer tone, ‘ an Indian handkerchief and a pair of golden slippers.’ ‘ Every one of these articles shall be here to-morrow evening,’ said Abdûlla, as he kissed his happy family ; and early next morning, taking a stout staff in his hand, he commenced his journey towards Meshed.

“ When Abdûlla approached the holy city his attention was first attracted by the cluster of splendid domes and minarets, which encircled the tomb of the holy Imâm Mehdee, whose roofs glittered with gold. He gazed with wonder at

a sight which appeared to him more like those which the faithful are promised in heaven, than any thing he ever expected to see on this earth. Passing through the streets which led to such magnificent buildings, he could look at nothing but them. When arrived at the gate of the sacred shrine, he stopped for a moment in silent awe, and asked a venerable priest, who was reading the Koran, if he might proceed, explaining at the same time his object. ‘Enter, my brother,’ said the old man; ‘bestow your alms, and you shall be rewarded; for one of the most pious of the caliphs has said—‘Prayer takes a man half way to paradise; fasting brings him to its portals; but these are only opened to him who is charitable.’”

“Having deposited, like a good and pious Mussulman, the fifth* of his treasure on the shrine of the holy Imâm, Abdûlla went to the great bazar; on entering which his senses were quite confounded by the novel sight of

* The Mahomedan law only requires a small deduction on account of charity from what is necessary for subsistence; but of all superfluous wealth (and such Abdûlla deemed his ten piastres) true believers were expected to give one-fifth to the poor.

the pedestrian crowd hurrying to and fro ; the richly-caparisoned horses, the splendid trains of the nobles, and the loaded camels and mules, which filled the space between rich shops, where every ware of Europe, India, China, Tartary, and Persia was displayed. He gazed with open mouth at every thing he saw, and felt for the first time what an ignorant and insignificant being he had hitherto been. Though pushed from side to side by those on foot, and often nearly run over by those on horseback, it was some time before he became aware of the dangers to which his wonder exposed him. These accidents however soon put him out of humour with the bustle he had at first so much admired, and determined him to finish his business and return to his quiet home.

“ Entering a shop where there was a number of silks, such as he had seen worn by the family of the reis, he inquired for their finest pieces. The shopman looked at him, and observing from his dress that he was from the country, concluded he was one of those rich farmers, who, notwithstanding the wealth they have acquired, maintain the plain habits of the peasantry, to whom they have a pride in belonging.

He, consequently, thought he had a good customer ; that is, a man who added to riches but little knowledge of the article he desired to purchase. With this impression he tossed and tumbled over every piece of silk in his shop. Abdûlla was so bewildered by their beauty and variety, that it was long before he could decide ; at last he fixed upon one, which was purple with a rich embroidered border. ‘ I will take this,’ he said, wrapping it up, and putting it under his arm ; ‘ What is the price ?’—‘ I shall only ask you, who are a new customer,’ said the man, ‘ two hundred piastres ; I should ask any one else three or four hundred for so exquisite a specimen of manufacture, but I wish to tempt you back again, when you leave your beautiful lands in the country to honour our busy town with your presence.’ Abdûlla stared, replaced the silk, and repeated in amazement—‘ Two—hundred—piastres ! you must be mistaken ; do you mean such piastres as these ?’ taking one out of the eight he had left in his pocket, and holding it up to the gaze of the astonished shopkeeper. ‘ Certainly I do,’ said the latter ; ‘ and it is very cheap at that price.’ ‘ Poor Zeebâ !’ said Abdûlla, with a sigh, at the thoughts of

her disappointment. 'Poor who?' said the silk-mercer. 'My wife,' said Abdûlla. 'What have I to do with your wife?' said the man, whose tone altered as his chance of sale diminished. 'Why,' said Abdûlla, 'I will tell you all: I have worked hard for the reis of our village ever since I was a boy; I never saw money till yesterday, when he gave me ten piastres. I came to Meshed, where I had never been before. I have given, like a good Mussulman, a fifth of my wealth to the Imâm Mehdee, the holy descendant of our blessed Prophet, and with the eight remaining piastres I intend to buy a piece of embroidered silk for my good wife, a horse and sword for my little boy, and an Indian handkerchief and a pair of golden slippers for my darling daughter; and here you ask me two hundred piastres for one piece of silk. How am I to pay you, and with what money am I to buy the other articles, tell me that?' said Abdûlla, in a reproachful tone. 'Get out of my shop!' said the enraged vender of silks; 'here have I been wasting my valuable time, and rumpling my choicest goods, for a fool and a madman! Go along to your Zeebâ and your booby children; buy stale cakes and black sugar for them, and

do not trouble me any more.' So saying, he thrust his new and valued customer out of the door.

“ Abdûlla muttered to himself as he went away, ‘ No doubt this is a rascal, but there may be honest men in Meshed ; I will try amongst the horse-dealers ; and having inquired where these were to be found, he hastened to get a handsome pony for Yûsuph. No sooner had he arrived at the horse market, and made his wishes known, than twenty were exhibited. As he was admiring one that pranced along delightfully, a friend, whom he had never seen before, whispered him to beware, that the animal though he went very well when heated was dead lame when cool. He had nearly made up his mind to purchase another, when the same man significantly pointed to the hand of the owner, which was one finger short, and then champing with his mouth and looking at the admired horse, gave Abdûlla to understand that his beloved boy might incur some hazard from such a purchase. The very thought alarmed him ; and he turned to his kind friend, and asked, if he could not recommend a suitable animal ? The man said, his brother had one, which, if he could be pre-

vailed upon to part with, would just answer, but he doubted whether he would sell him; yet as his son, who used to ride this horse, was gone to school, he thought he might. Abdûlla was all gratitude, and begged him to exert his influence. This was promised and done; and in a few minutes a smart little grey horse, with head and tail in the air, cantered up. The delighted peasant conceived Yûsuph on his back, and in a hurry to realize his vision, demanded the price. 'Any other person but yourself,' said the man, 'should not have him for one piastre less than two hundred; but as I trust to make a friend as well as a bargain, I have persuaded my brother to take only one hundred and fifty.' The astonished Abdûlla stepped back—'Why you horse-dealers,' said he, 'whom I thought were such good men, are as bad as the silk-mercens!' He then recapitulated to his friend the rise of his present fortune, and all that had occurred since he entered Meshed. The man had hardly patience to hear him to a close; 'And have I,' said he, 'been throwing away my friendship, and hazarding a quarrel with my brethren, by an over-zealous honesty to please a fool of a bumpkin! Get along to your Zeebâ, and your Yûsuph, and

your Fatima, and buy for your young hopeful the sixteenth share of a jack-ass ! the smallest portion of that animal is more suited to your means and your mind, than a hair of the tail of the fine horses you have presumed to look at !

“ So saying, he went away in a rage, leaving Abdûlla in perfect dismay. He thought, however, he might still succeed in obtaining some of the lesser articles ; he however met with nothing but disappointment : the lowest priced sword was thirty piastres, the golden slippers were twenty, and a small Indian handkerchief was twelve, being four piastres more than all he possessed.

“ Disgusted with the whole scene, the good man turned his steps towards home. As he was passing through the suburbs he met a holy mendicant exclaiming, ‘ Charity, charity ! He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord ; and he that lendeth to the Lord shall be repaid a hundred-fold.’ ‘ What is that you say ?’ said Abdûlla. The beggar repeated his exclamation. ‘ You are the only person I can deal with,’ said the good but simple peasant ; ‘ there are eight piastres—all I possess ; take them, and use them in the name of the Almighty, but take care that

I am hereafter paid a hundred-fold, for without it I shall never be able to gratify my dear wife and children.' And in the simplicity of his heart he repeated to the mendicant all which had occurred, that he might exactly understand the situation in which he was placed.

"The holy man, scarcely able to suppress a smile as he carefully folded up the eight piastres, bade Abdûlla to be of good heart, and rely upon a sure return. He then left him, exclaiming as before, 'Charity, charity! He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and he that lendeth to the Lord shall be repaid a hundred-fold.'

"When Abdûlla came within sight of his cottage, they all ran to meet him. The breathless Yûsuph was the first who reached his father: 'Where is my horse and my sword?' 'And my Indian handkerchief and golden slippers?' said little Fatima, who had now come up. 'And my silk vest?' said Zeebâ, who was close behind her daughter. 'But wealth has changed your disposition, my dear Abdûlla!' said the good woman: 'you have become grave, and no doubt,' she added with a smile, 'so dignified, that you could not be burdened, but have hired a servant to bring home the horse and to carry the pre-

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sents for your family. Well, children, be patient ; we shall see every thing in a few minutes.' Abdûlla shook his head, but would not speak a word till he entered his dwelling. He then seated himself on his coarse mat, and repeated all his adventures, every part of which was heard with temper till his last act, that of giving his piastres to the mendicant. Zeebâ, who had a little more knowledge of the world than her husband, and whose mind was ruffled by disappointment, loudly reproached him with his stupidity and folly in thus throwing away the money he had obtained by the liberality of the reis, to whom she immediately went and gave information of all that had occurred. The enraged squire sent for Abdûlla : ' You blockhead,' said he, ' what have you been about ? I, who am a man of substance, never give more than a copper coin * to these vagabond rascals who go about asking charity ; and here you have given one of them eight piastres ; enough to spoil the whole generation ; but he promised you a hundred-fold, and you shall have it to prevent future folly. Here,' said he to the servants near him,

* " Pool-e-siyâh," literally, black coin.

‘seize the fellow, and give him a hundred stripes!’ The order was obeyed as soon as given, and poor Abdûlla went home on the night of the day following that which had dawned upon his wealth, sore from a beating, without a coin in his pocket, out of temper with silk-merciers, horse-dealers, cutlers, slipper-makers, mendicants, squires, wives, himself, and all the world.

“Early next morning Abdûlla was awakened by a message, that the reis wanted him. Before he went he had forgiven his wife, who was much grieved at the punishment which her indiscretion had brought upon her husband. He also kissed his children, and bid them be of good heart, for he might yet, through God’s favour, make amends for the disappointment he had caused them. When he came to the reis, the latter said, ‘I have found a job for you, Abdûlla, that will bring you to your senses: here, in this dry soil, I mean to dig for water, and you must toil day after day till it is found.’ So saying, he went away, leaving Abdûlla to his own sad reflections and hard labour. He made little progress the first two days; but on the third, when about six cubits below the surface, he came upon a brass vessel: on looking into which, he found

it full of round white stones, which were beautiful from their smoothness and fine lustre. He tried to break one with his teeth, but could not. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘this is no doubt some of the rice belonging to the squire which has been turned into stones: I am glad of it—he is a cruel master; I will, however, take them home—they are very pretty; and now I recollect I saw some very like them at Meshed for sale. But what can this be?’ said Abdûlla to himself, disengaging another pot from the earth—‘Oho! these are darker, they must have been wheat—but they are very beautiful; and here!’ cried he, ‘these shining pieces of glass are finer and brighter than all the rest: but I will try if they are glass;’ and he put one of them between two stones, but could not break it.

“Pleased with this discovery, and believing he had got something valuable, but ignorant what it was, he dug out all he could find, and putting them into a bag carefully concealed it even from his wife. His plan was, to obtain a day’s leave from his master, and go again to Meshed, where he had hopes of selling the pretty stones of various colours for as much money as would purchase the silk vest, the horse,

the sword, the slippers, and the handkerchief. His mind dwelt with satisfaction on the pleasing surprise it would be to those he loved, to see him return home, mounted on the horse, and loaded with the other articles. But while the pious Abdûlla indulged in this dream, he always resolved that the Imâm Mehdee should receive a fifth of whatever wealth he obtained.

“ After some weeks’ hard labour at the well water was found. The reis was in good humour, and the boon of a holiday was granted. Abdûlla departed before day-light, that no one might see the bag which he carried; when close to Meshed, he concealed it near the root of a tree, having first taken out two handfuls of the pretty stones, to try what kind of a market he could make of them. He went to a shop where he had seen some like them. He asked the man, pointing to those in the shop, if he would buy any such articles? ‘Certainly,’ said the jeweller, for such he was; ‘have you one to sell?’ ‘One!’ said Abdûlla, ‘I have plenty.’ ‘Plenty!’ repeated the man. ‘Yes; a bag-full.’ ‘Common pebbles, I suppose; can you show me any?’ ‘Look here!’ said Abdûlla, taking out a handful, which so surprised the jeweller

that it was some time before he could speak. 'Will you remain here, honest man,' said he, 'for a moment,' trembling as he spoke, 'and I will return instantly.' So saying, he left the shop, but re-appeared in a few minutes with the chief magistrate and some of his attendants. 'There is the man,' said he; 'I am innocent of all dealings with him: he has found the long lost treasure of Khoosroo*; his pockets are filled with diamonds, rubies, and pearls, in price and lustre far beyond any existing; and he says he has a bag-full.' The magistrate ordered Abdûlla to be searched, and the jewels which had been described were found. He was then desired to show where he had deposited the bag, which he did; all were carefully sealed, and carried with Abdûlla to the governor, by whom he was strictly examined. He told his whole history from first to last: the receiving of ten piastres; his charity at the shrine of the Imâm; his intended purchases; the conduct of the mercer, the horse-dealer, the cutler, the slipper-maker; the promises of the mendicant; the disappoint-

* Cyrus. There is a common belief in Persia that an immense treasure was buried by this monarch.

ment and anger of his wife; the cruelty of the reis; the digging of the well; the discovery of the pretty stones; the plan formed for disposing of them, with the reserve for further charity: all this was narrated with a clearness and simplicity that stamped its truth, which was confirmed by the testimony of his wife and children, who were brought to Meshed. But notwithstanding this, Abdûlla, his family, and the treasures he had found, were a few days afterwards despatched for Isfahan, under a guard of five hundred horsemen. Express couriers were sent before to advise the ministers of the great Abbas of the discovery which had been made, and of all that had been done.

“During these proceedings at Meshed, extraordinary events occurred at Isfahan. Shah Abbas the Great saw one night in a dream the holy Imâm Mehdee, clothed in green robes. The saint, after looking steadfastly at the monarch, exclaimed, ‘Abbas, protect and favour my friend!’ The king was much troubled at this dream, and desired his astrologers and wise men to expound it: but they could not. On the two following nights the same vision appeared, and the same words were pronounced. The

monarch lost all temper, and threatened the chief astrologer and others with death, unless they relieved the anxiety of his mind before the evening of the same day. While preparations were making for their execution, the couriers from the governor of Meshed arrived, and the vizier, after perusing the letters, hastened to the king. ‘Let the mind of the refuge* of the world be at repose,’ he said; ‘for the dream of our monarch is explained. The peasant Abdûlla of Khorassan, who, though ignorant and poor, is pious and charitable, and who has become the chosen instrument of Providence for discovering the treasures of Khoosroo, is the revealed friend of the holy Imâm Mehdee, who has commanded that this good and humble man be honoured by the protection and favour of the king of kings.’

“Shah Abbas listened to the particulars which were written from Meshed with delight: his mind was quite relieved, and he ordered all his nobles and his army to accompany him a day’s march from Isfahan to meet the friend of the holy Imâm. When the approach of the

* Jehân-Penâh.

party was announced, the king walked from his tent a short distance to meet them. First came one hundred horsemen; next Abdûlla, with his arms bound, sitting on a camel; after him, on another, his wife Zeebâ, and followed by their children, Yûsuph and Fatima, riding together on a third. Behind the prisoners was the treasure. A hundred horsemen guarded each flank, and two hundred covered the rear. Shah Abbas made the camels which carried Abdûlla and his family kneel close to him, and aided, with his royal hands, to untie the cords by which the good man was bound, while others released his wife and children. A suit of the king's own robes were directed to be put upon Abdûlla, and the monarch led him to a seat close to his throne: but before he would consent to be seated, he thus addressed his majesty.

“ ‘ O King of the Universe, I am a poor man, but I was contented with my lot, and happy in my family, till I first knew wealth. From that day my life has been a series of misfortunes: folly and ambition have made me entertain wishes out of my sphere, and I have brought disappointment and misfortune on those I loved best; but now that my death is near, and it pleases

your majesty to amuse yourself with a mock-honour to your slave, he is satisfied, if your royal clemency will only spare the lives of that kind woman and these dear children. Let them be restored to the peace and innocence of their native valley, and deal with me according to your royal pleasure.'

"On uttering these words, Abdûlla, overcome by his feelings, burst into tears. Abbas was himself greatly moved. 'Good and pious man,' he said, 'I intend to honour, not to slay thee. Thy humble and sincere prayers, and thy charitable offerings at the shrine of the holy Mehdee, have been approved and accepted. He has commanded me to protect and favour thee. Thou shalt stay a few days at my capital, to recover from thy fatigues, and return as governor of that province from which thou hast come a prisoner. A wise minister, versed in the forms of office, shall attend thee; but in thy piety and honesty of character I shall find the best qualities for him who is destined to rule over others. Thy good wife Zeebâ has already received the silk vest she so anxiously expected; and it shall be my charge,' continued the gracious monarch, with a smile, 'to see Yûsuph provided with a

horse and sword, and that little Fatima shall have her handkerchief and golden slippers.'

"The manner as well as the expressions of the king dispelled all Abdûlla's fears, and filled his heart with boundless gratitude. He was soon after nominated governor of Khorassan, and became famous over the country for his humanity and justice. He repaired, beautified, and richly endowed the shrine of the holy Imâm, to whose guardian care he ever ascribed his advancement. Yûsuph became a favourite of Abbas, and was distinguished by his skill in horsemanship, and by his gallantry. Fatima was married to one of the principal nobles, and the good Zeebâ had the satisfaction through life of being sole mistress in her family, and having no rival in the affection of her husband, who continued to cherish, in his exalted situation, those ties and feelings which had formed his happiness in humble life."

Such is the story of Abdûlla of Khorassan, as given by my friend Derveesh Seffer; but the difference between perusing it and hearing him tell it, is that between reading a play and seeing it acted by the first performers. I had heard him tell this tale ten years before, when

a curious incident occurred. Two gentlemen rose to leave the party when he was commencing: he asked the cause of their departure. "They do not understand Persian," I said. "That is of no consequence," he replied; "entreat them to stay, and they will soon find that their ignorance of the language does not place them beyond my power." His wishes were explained, and the result proved he was correct: they were nearly as much entertained as others, and had their feelings almost equally excited; such was his admirable expression of countenance, and so varied the intonations of his voice.

I was pleased to see my friend Derveesh Seffer treated with liberality by the Elchee. Such conduct towards persons of his character and profession makes useful impressions. But here, as elsewhere, much depends upon the selection of proper objects of notice; and it is no easy matter to resist the constant attempts which are made to obtain money or presents.

A poet of Shiraz, named Moollâh Adam, had gone a stage from that city to present an ode to the Elchee, whom he had in this long and laboured production compared to Roostem, the hero of Persia, for valour; to Peerân-Weeseh,

the Solomon of Tartary, for wisdom; and to Hâtim-Tâi, the most munificent of Arabian princes, for generosity. He had been rewarded for his trouble, but was not satisfied, and his genius was taxed to obtain something more. While we were sitting in the room, at the gateway of the beautiful garden of Jehân-Noomâ, looking at the mules carrying our baggage towards Isfahan, this votary of the muses made his appearance: his professed object was to take leave; his real purpose was to read an epigram of four lines *, the concluding one of which was—

“ Moollâh Adam neek sâ'et yâft.”

This line, from sâ'et signifying hour or watch, might either be translated,

“ Moollâh Adam chose a good (or propitious) hour,”
or,

“ Moollâh Adam got a good watch.”

The animals, laden with the most valuable articles, were at the moment on the road below the window where we were seated, and the Elchee, pointing to them, said, “ Sâ'et goozesht,” the hour is past, or, the watch is gone. The

* Roobâi or Quatrain.

countenance of the poet, which had, on reading his last line, glistened with expectation, changed for a moment, but was soon covered with forced smiles, and he declared that he would rather carry the Elchee's happy reply into the city than ten watches. I trembled lest this flattery should succeed: it did not; and he departed apparently in good humour, but inwardly, no doubt, much disappointed.

CHAPTER XII.

PERSIAN SERVANTS—DEPARTURE FROM SHIRAZ—
PERSEPOLIS—TALE OF THE LABOURS OF ROOSTEM
—ANECDOTE OF A SPORTSMAN.

THE formation of the Elchee's establishment, which had commenced at Abusheher, was completed at Shiraz. Servants of every description were hired; and in all cases the preference was given to those who had been on our first mission; when such were dead, that was transferred to their brothers, sons, or near relations.

The Persians are more than good-looking, they are a handsome race of men. All the public and private servants of the mission were dressed in silk or cloth tunics, with new lamb's-wool caps, many with silk and some with shawl-waistbands; besides, they were all clean, and had their beards well-trimmed for the occasion, knowing that, to those who pretend to figure in the train of an Elchee, personal appearance is of no slight consequence.

Thus attended, we proceeded towards the footstool of royalty. Nine splendidly dressed

Jelloodârs or grooms, under the direction of a Meer-Akhour, or master-of-the-horse, led nine beautiful horses, richly caparisoned, with saddles and bridles finely ornamented with gold and silver. Next came eight Shâtirs, or running footmen, dressed in tunics of yellow cloth, trimmed with silver; and then the Elchee and suite, followed by a large escort of cavalry, with kettle-drums and trumpets. On the flanks of this state-line of march were all kinds of Meer-zâs*, or secretaries, and attendants. Amongst the most essential of the latter were the Paish-Khidmets, or personal servants, who prepared kelliâns or pipes for the Elchee and the gentlemen of his train. These were mounted, and carried before them, fixed like holsters, two large cases which contained their kelliâns, and all the implements thereunto appertaining. The most extraordinary part of their equipment was two small iron chafing-dishes filled with charcoal, which hung by chains, dangling below their stirrups. From these grates they lighted the kelliân, which they held in their hands, present-

* The word Meerzâ, when prefixed to a name, implies a secretary or civilian; when it follows, it designates a prince.

ing their masters with the end of a long pliant tube, through which the latter smoked, while the Paish-Khidmets rode a few paces in the rear.

Our cavalcade always preserved the same order even during our long night-marches, the tediousness of which suggested that our party wanted a minstrel to shorten the distance by tales of wonder. This want was no sooner hinted, than an old groom, called Joozee Beg, came forward and offered his services. He belonged, he said, to the Zend tribe, and when its chiefs were kings of Persia he was not neglected. “Moorâd Ali Khan, and Lootf Ali Khan, that miracle of valour,” said old Joozee Beg, “have listened to my voice, when it was exerted to animate* their followers to battle; but these days are gone; a Turkish family wears the crown of Iran†; I am, like others of my race, in indigence and ob-

* It has long been the custom in Persia for persons to recite animating verses, from the Shâh-Nâmeh, at the commencement of, and during a battle. The late king, Aga Mahomed, was particularly fond of this usage, and bestowed marks of his favour on such minstrels.

† Iran is the ancient name of Persia, as Turan is of Tartary.

scurity, and now recite verses, which princes loved to hear, to men like myself of low degree; but if the Elchee desires, I will repeat some lines fit for a soldier to listen to, from the Shâh-Nâmeh of Firdousee." This prelude gave more pleasure, from its near resemblance to that of our well-known northern minstrel :

" No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay.—
Old times are past, old manners gone,
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear."

Joozee Beg was told his offer was accepted, and after giving the horse he led to another, and taking his place in the front of the running footmen, he began as follows.

" It is hardly necessary to explain to one with such great knowledge as the Elchee, and to men of such enlightened understandings as those by whom he is surrounded, that Siyâvesh, son of Ky-Kâoos, King of Persia, fled into Tar-

tary, and took refuge with Afrâsiâb, king of that country, who first gave him his beautiful daughter Feringhees in marriage, and then put him to death. The widow of the unfortunate prince was left, with her infant son, the celebrated Ky-Khoosroo*, to the persecution of her tyrannical father, whose conduct provoked the vengeance of the king and nobles of Persia; but you shall now hear the first battle, in which the Persians were commanded by that hero Roostem, and the Turks by their king Afrâsiâb.”

After this prelude, Joozee Beg cleared his throat, and began to recite in a voice which, though loud and at times almost deafening, was not without melody. The following is a literal translation of the fight as given by our minstrel.

“Hearken to the sound of the drum from two quarters; the restless warriors are impatient of delay; the trumpet’s bray is heard afar; and the cymbals, clarions, and fifes of India and China join in the clang of war; the shout of battle reaches the clouds, and the earth vibrates to the neighing of steeds. When the noise of the

* The celebrated Ky-Khoosroo of the Persians is the Cyrus of the Greeks.

approaching army was heard upon the plain, the report was conveyed to Roostem, the avenger*. They told him the force of Afrâsiâb was near; that his great army rode over the plain as a proud ship rides upon the seas; that his troops were in number like ants and locusts, and covered from the eye of the beholder the mountains, plains, and woods. When Roostem heard that the army of the King of Turan† was in sight, he placed himself in the centre of his force; Zevâreh, his brother, was posted in the rear; Ferâmerz, his son, was stationed in front; Toos, with his band, was placed on the right. They were many in number, but one in heart‡. Feribooz, the son of Ky-Kâoos§, was on the left, surrounded by a family of valiant men; Gooderz covered the rear with his relations, who were all free and independent|| heroes. The air was darkened with

* Roostem Keeneh-Kh'âh. The hero has this epithet as he was desirous of avenging the death of Siyâvesh, murdered by Afrâsiâb.

† Tartary.

‡ "Their swords are a thousand, their bosoms are one."

—Lochiel's Warning.

§ Kâoos was at this time King of Iran or Persia.

|| The term in the original is "Azâdigân," which means

the swords of the brave, when the glorious standard of Gâveh* was unfurled.

“ The leaders of the army of Turan now arrange their shields. Bahamân commanded their right wing : he was surrounded by men as powerful as they were valiant. The left was led by Rahrem the renowned, and the centre by King Afrâsiâb in person. The earth from the hoofs of the horses became of the colour of an elephant, the air was spotted with lances like the skin of the leopard. The world had the appearance of a mountain of iron with a crest of steel. The war-horses neighed, and the standards fluttered, while the dark-edged swords scattered heads upon the plain. Peelsem† rushed from

men free or independent, that are not subject to the authority of others : heroes who went more with the cause than the leader.

* This famous standard was a blacksmith's apron set in jewels, and was long the imperial standard of Persia. Gâveh was a blacksmith; he overthrew the cruel tyrant Zohâk, and placed Feridoon on the throne of Persia. When collecting followers, he carried his apron as the standard of revolt against Zohâk. This apron remained the standard of the empire till taken by Saad-ben-wakâs, who commanded the Mahomedan army that conquered Persia.

† The brother of Peerân-Weeseh, the favourite vizier and counsellor of Afrâsiâb.

the centre of the army ; his heart was filled with rage, and his visage covered with frowns. He exclaimed aloud to the heroes of Iran, ‘ Where is Roostem ? They tell me he is a dragon in the day of battle.’ At this instant a shout was heard from Roostem, which shook all around. He said to his troops, ‘ Move not forward from the spot on which you now are. I go to silence this Peelsem, whose heart burns with rage, and whose visage is covered with frowns.’ Roostem, foaming with passion, rushed to the front of the battle ; he couched his strong lance, fixed himself in his seat, and raising his shield to his head, he exclaimed, ‘ O Peelsem, thou celebrated warrior, hast thou called me forth that thou mightest consume me with thy breath ?’ Thus saying, he struck his lance through Peelsem’s body, and raised him on its point from his saddle, like a light ball. He continued his charge to the centre of the army of Turan, and casting the body from the point of his spear, exclaimed, ‘ Clothe this corpse of your friend in a pale * shroud, for the dark dust has soiled it.’ Now

* The word means pale or yellow, and has an allusion to fear, of which that colour is the emblem in Persia.

the shout of heroes and the blows of maces are heard, and the voice of the trumpets shakes the earth. The deep drum sounds from the back of the elephant to the distance of many miles*: the earth was wearied by the tread of horses. Each pool became like a sea with blood, and each plain like a mountain from the slain, and every stone was turned into coral. Many were the proud who were laid low on that day. Heaven seemed to call for blood, and the breast of a father was devoid of mercy for his son. From the dark flights of the eagle-feathered arrows, with their steely points, the air was deprived of the space it occupied: the clashing of swords reached the skies, and blood flowed from the boundary of India to the Oxus. The flashing of scimitars and spears, seen through the thick clouds of dust, appeared like the forked lightning amid the dark clouds of the firmament. The day was made by death, black, like the face of an Ethiopian. The numbers of the slain filled the roads, and the plains were strewn with helmets and shields, and heads were seen as if lamenting for each other. The hearts of the army of the

* The word "meel" in Persian, is nearly our mile.

King of Turan were broken, and the field of battle became dark in their sight. ‘Our good fortune,’ exclaimed Afrâsiâb to his troops, ‘is no longer awake, but sleepeth.’ They left the field covered with iron, silver, and gold; with helmets, lances, and bucklers. The poorest in the army of Iran became that day a man of wealth, from the quantity of ornaments and jewels.

“ ‘Whosoever desireth to succeed, and to avoid trouble and danger, will not wander in the path of the wicked *.’ ”

Here our bard ended his battle, which differs in some stanzas from my copy of Firdousee; but that is not surprising, as I never knew two copies of this celebrated work that did not differ in a hundred places.

The attendants of the mission, particularly those who were of the ancient Persian tribes, and who hate the Tartars, were delighted with Joozee Beg’s battle. We all expressed our satisfaction, and were assured by the minstrel that we were kader-dâns, judges of merit. But his delight appeared incomplete, until he heard

* This last stanza is a reflection of the poet, referring to the injustice of the cause of the Tartars.

the Elchee add to his thanks an order for a present of a few piastres. He then said he was “happy—he was honoured;” that he had often heard of the fame of the English nation, but was now, from personal observation, quite satisfied they were the first people upon earth.

The journey from Shiraz to Isfahan abounds with remains of the former glory of Persia. The greatest is the far-famed Persepolis of the Greeks, the Elemais of the Hebrews, and the Istakhar of the Persians. Every traveller has described these magnificent ruins, which the natives of the country distinguish by the name of Chehl-Menâr (forty* pillars), and Tekht-e-Jemsheed (throne of Jemsheed). Some conjecture that it was formerly a palace, others are quite positive it must have been a temple. I am much too wise to venture on speculations which have bewildered so many learned men. My reader must therefore be satisfied with a conversation I had upon this abstruse subject with some of my fellow-travellers, when I visited these monuments of ancient grandeur.

“This building,” said Aga Meer, “was the

* Forty, both in India and Persia, is used to express an indefinite number or quantity.

house of Solomon, at least so I have read in the History of Shiraz.” “And what did the foolish writer of that book know about Solomon?” said Mahomed Hoosein Khan; “but the author, I suppose, concluded, that because Solomon was the wisest of men, he must choose Persia as his residence; and every Persian will agree in such a conclusion.” “No doubt,” said the mild Aga Meer, either not understanding the little nabob’s sarcasm at the vanity of his countrymen, or not wishing to enter into farther discussion.

“People are divided,” said the Khan, pleased with his own sally, “whether this was a palace or a temple; if it was built and inhabited by Jemsheed, it was probably both; for he says, in the Shâh-nâmeh, ‘By the divine favour, I am both a sovereign and a priest*’; and if this first and most wonderful man of Persia studied his ease and convenience half as much as his countrymen now do, it is most probable, that, to save himself trouble, he would join his palace and his temple together.”

“You Europeans,” continued Khan Sâhib, turning to me, “believe that Alexander, to

* Men-em gooft bâ-ferra-e-Eezidee Be-hem sheheryâree be-hem Moobidee.

please a beautiful lady, set fire to this palace in a spirit of mischief; we Mahomedans have the consolation to think this proud abode of unbelievers was destroyed when our first caliphs conquered Persia, through a spirit of holiness. It was a rule," said he, smiling, "of the first pious propagators of our religion, always to give to infidels an earnest in this world of what they were to expect in the next; so they and their profane works were included in one common sentence of destruction."

Though neither the Indian Moonshee, Mahomed Hoosein, nor the Persian Meerzâ, liked the levity with which my little friend treated such a serious subject; they saw he was in too lively a vein to expect to check him, but they looked grave. This he observed, and to change the subject, asked me what I thought was the meaning of a figure, to which he pointed, half of whose body appeared rising out of a circle, and to which wings were attached? I told him, he could not apply to one who was more ignorant of such subjects than myself, but I would tell him what the learned of Europe had conjectured regarding this mystical figure.

The detail was long, and embraced a variety

of opinions ; but I concluded by observing, that the figure was believed to be that of a Ferooher, or spirit, which, according to the doctrine of Zoroaster, is an associate of an existing being, with whose soul or spiritual part it is united before birth and after death.

“ These Feroohers,” said I, “ were sometimes invoked as guardian angels : they were male and female, and were not, in their connexion with this earth, limited to human creatures ; some of the race belonged to the vegetable world. Trees had their Feroohers.” I was becoming more than learned, I was mystical, and on the point of showing some striking analogies between these aerial spirits of the ancient Persians, and the Sylphs, the Dryads, and the Hamadryads of the Greeks, when Khan Sâhib, anxious to make amends with his Mahomedan friends, for the slight which he saw they supposed he had put upon the first caliphs, interrupted me by saying—

“ Well, God knows ! however we may question the humanity, if not the policy, of extirpating whole races of men, because they did not believe exactly as we do, assuredly the founders of our holy religion have merit in putting an end to Feroohers, and all such trumpery as you have

been talking about. There is enough of wicked flesh and blood in this world to give an honest man trouble and alarm, without his being scared in a wood, or frightened in his sleep by ghosts, spirits, and demons. The Glorious Volume*, thank Heaven, has put an end to all these gentry. But, after all, I really wish (looking round at the ruins) that while it conferred this benefit upon us, and gave us more space in the world, by the removal of some incorrigible infidels, it had spared some of their best works, if it were only as specimens of their folly and pride."

As he was concluding this sentence, Hajee Hoosein came from the Elchee with pipes and coffee for our refreshment. "You were speaking of good works," said the Hajee. "I was speaking of works," said the Khan. "It is all the same," replied the Hajee, determined not to lose an opportunity of showing his reading: "works are every thing in this world, as Sâdee says—'Alas, for him that's gone, and done no work! The drum of departure has beat, and his burden is not made up †.'"

* Mes'hef-e-Mejeed, a pious allusion to the Koran.

† "Heif", ber ân kih reft oo kâr ne-sâkht

Koos-e-rihlet zed oo bâr ne-sâkht!"

The admiration given to the expression and sentiment of the moralist of Persia did not prevent a laugh at the manner in which it was applied. The Hajee, however, was not displeased with our mirth; he was too full of Sâdee's apophthegms and stanzas, and too eager to mix in conversation, to be particular as to the time or place in which he gave utterance to his recollections; and their want of application often rendered them more entertaining.

We returned to our tents with a resolution of completing our knowledge of the wonders of this place, by a visit to the famous rocks in the vicinity of Persepolis, which are called "The Sculptures of Roostem*."

Though there can be little doubt, from the similarity of these figures to those on the Sassanian coins, that they have been made to perpetuate the glory of the first sovereigns of that family; yet, when I on the ensuing day mentioned this conjecture to my Persian friends, I found I was regarded as an envious Frank, who wanted to detract from their hero Roostem, with whose fame all that is valiant, powerful, or wonderful in this country is associated; and

* Neksha-e-Roostem.

whose name has been given to this, as it has been to all other sculptures representing any warlike deeds, of which the precise history is unknown.

In order to make amends for the errors of my knowledge, I commenced a panegyric on their favourite warrior. “We have,” I said, “an account from the Greeks of a celebrated hero of theirs called Hercules, whom they have deified, and whom many of our learned confound with Roostem; but this Hercules was, in my opinion, hardly fit to carry the slippers of your hero.

“The Greeks talk of the club of Hercules, but what was his club to the bull-headed mace with which Roostem destroyed whole armies? Hercules, when an infant, crushed a couple of serpents; but Roostem, when a child, brained a furious elephant: Hercules shot his enemy, Ephialtes, in one eye; but Roostem did twice as much, for with a forked arrow he sealed in eternal darkness both eyes of the prince Esfendiâr: Hercules wore a lion’s hide; Roostem had, according to Firdousee, a vest made of the skins of several lions. Both heroes had supernatural aid, but Roostem seldom required it;

for he was endowed with the strength of one hundred and twenty elephants*; and out of fifty thousand horses one only, the celebrated Reksh, was found capable of bearing his weight.

“Hercules,” I continued, “we are told by the Greeks (who, however, are great romancers), accomplished twelve labours; but what are these compared to the Heft Kh’ân, or Seven Stages of Roostem? Besides, it is doubted whether Hercules could ride—he certainly had no horse of any fame; whereas Reksh excelled all horses as much as his rider did all men.”

This moderate and just tribute to the hero of Persia quite restored me to the good graces of my friends, who concurred with me in requesting our old minstrel, who had charge of the horses of some of our party, to recount to us the story of the Heft Kh’ân, or Seven Stages of Roostem. He could not, he said, recite these great events as written in the page of the immortal Firdousee; but if we would be satisfied, he could give us the tale in prose, as he had

* This, in the present *vapouring* age, would be called a hundred and twenty elephant-power; but I dare not take a liberty with my text when recording facts.

heard it read from the Shemsheer-Khânee*. Being assured that what he recollected of the story would be quite enough, and his audience having seated themselves beneath the sculptured rocks, he began as follows:

“ Persia was at peace, and prosperous; but its king, Ky-Kâoos, could never remain at rest. A favourite singer gave him one day an animated account of the beauties of the neighbouring kingdom of Mazenderan†; its ever blooming roses, its melodious nightingales, its verdant plains, its mountains shaded with lofty trees, and adorned to their summits with flowers which perfumed the air, its clear murmuring rivulets, and, above all, its lovely damsels and valiant warriors.

“ All these were described to the sovereign in such glowing colours, that he quite lost his reason, and declared he should never be happy till his power extended over a country so favoured by nature. It was in vain that his wisest ministers and most attached nobles dissuaded

* The Shemsheer-Khânee is a prose abridgement of the Shâh-Nâmeh, into which are introduced some of the finest passages of Firdousee's poetry.

† The ancient Hyrcania.

him from so hazardous an enterprise as that of invading a region, which had, besides other defenders, a number of Deevs, or demons, who, acting under their renowned chief Deev-e-Seffeed, or the White Demon, had hitherto defeated all enemies."

"Is the Deev-e-Seffeed," said I, stopping the narrator, and turning to Aga Meer, "believed by modern Persians to have been a supernatural being, as his name implies? or is this deemed a poetical fiction of Firdousee to describe a formidable warrior, perhaps a more northern prince, and therefore of a fairer complexion?" "Why," said the Meer, "it is with us almost a crime to refuse belief to a single line Firdousee has written; but though there is no doubt he has given the account of these Deevs as he found it, in the public records from which he composed his great historical poem; we find in some of our best dictionaries, such as the *Jehângeeree*, and *Boorhân-e-Kâti*, the word Deev rendered 'a valiant warrior,' which shows that the learned authors of these works entertained the same notion as you do."

"If I had written a dictionary," said Mahomed Hoosein Khan, "I should have solved

the difficulty by explaining, that Deev was a man who fought like a devil."

This little sally finished our grave disquisition; and Joozee Beg, who seemed not a little impatient at the interruption, resumed his narration.

"Ky-Kâoos," as I said before, "would not listen to his nobles, who in despair sent for old Zâl, the father of Roostem, and prince of Seestan. Zâl came and used all his efforts, but in vain; the monarch was involved in clouds of pride, and closed a discussion he had with Zâl, by exclaiming, 'The Creator of the world is my friend; the chief of the Deevs is my prey*.' This impious boasting satisfied Zâl he could do no good; and he even refused to become regent of Persia in the absence of Ky-Kâoos, but promised to aid with his counsel.

"The king departed to anticipated conquest; but the Prince of Mazenderan summoned his forces, and above all the Deev-e-Seffeed and his band. They came at his call: a great battle†

* "Jehân-âfireenendeh yâr-e-men est
Ser-e-nereh deevân shikâr-e-men est."

† It was in this battle that the armies were, according to Firdousee, enveloped in sudden darkness, as had been

ensued, in which the Persians were completely defeated. Ky-Kâoos was made prisoner and confined in a strong fortress under the guard of a hundred Deevs, commanded by Arjeng, who was instructed to ask the Persian monarch every morning how he liked the roses, nightingales, flowers, trees, verdant meadows, shady mountains, clear streams, beautiful damsels, and valiant warriors of Mazenderan?

“The news of this disaster soon spread over Persia, and notwithstanding the disgust of old Zâl at the headstrong folly of his monarch, he was deeply afflicted at the tale of his misfortune and disgrace. He sent for Roostem, to whom he said, ‘Go, my son, and with thy single arm, and thy good horse Reksh, release our sovereign.’ Roostem instantly obeyed. There were two roads, but he chose the nearest, though it was reported to be by far the most difficult and dangerous. Now,” said Joozee Beg, “it would occupy the whole day if I was to relate at

foretold by a magician. The mention of this fact proves it to be the same action during which, Herodotus tells us, a total eclipse of the sun took place, as had been foretold by Thales the Milesian.—Vide Hist. of Persia, vol. i. p. 3.

length the adventures of the heft khân: a short account of the obstacles which the hero overcame at each will suffice.

“Fatigued with his first day’s journey, Roostem lay down to sleep, having turned Reksh loose to graze in a neighbouring meadow, where he was attacked by a furious lion; but this wonderful horse, after a short contest, struck his antagonist to the ground with a blow from his fore-hoof, and completed the victory by seizing the throat of the royal animal with his teeth. When Roostem awoke, he was surprised and enraged. He desired Reksh never again to attempt, unaided, such an encounter. ‘Hadst thou been slain,’ asked he of the intelligent brute, ‘how should I have accomplished my enterprise?’

“At the second stage Roostem had nearly died of thirst, but his prayers to the Almighty were heard: a fawn appeared, as if to be his guide, and following it, he was conducted to a clear fountain, where, after regaling on the flesh of a wild ass*, which he had killed with his bow, he lay down to sleep. In the middle of

* Goor.

the night a monstrous serpent, seventy yards in length, came out of its hiding-place, and made at the hero, who was awaked by the neighing of Reksh; but the serpent had crept back to his hiding-place, and Roostem seeing no danger, abused his faithful horse for disturbing his repose. Another attempt of the serpent was defeated in the same way; but as the monster had again concealed himself, Roostem lost all patience with Reksh, whom he threatened to put to death if he again awaked him by any such unseasonable noises. The faithful steed, fearing his master's rage, but strong in his attachment, instead of neighing when the serpent again made its appearance, sprung upon it, and commenced a furious contest. Roostem, hearing the noise, started up and joined in the combat. The serpent darted at him, but he avoided it, and, while his noble horse seized their enemy by the back, the hero cut off its head with his sword.

“ When the serpent was slain, Roostem contemplated its enormous size with amazement, and, with that piety which always distinguished him, returned thanks to the Almighty for his miraculous escape.

“ Next day, as Roostem sat by a fountain,

he saw a beautiful damsel regaling herself with wine. He approached her, accepted her invitation to partake of the beverage, and clasped her in his arms as if she had been an angel. It happened, in the course of their conversation, that the Persian hero mentioned the name of the great God he adored. At the sound of that sacred word the fair features and shape of the female changed, and she became black, ugly, and deformed. The astonished Roostem seized her, and, after binding her hands, bid her declare who she was. 'I am a sorceress,' was the reply, 'and have been employed by the evil-spirit Aharman for thy destruction: but save my life, and I am powerful to do thee service.' 'I make no compact with the devil or his agents,' said the hero, and cut her in twain. He again poured forth his soul in thanksgiving to God for his deliverance.

"On his fourth stage Roostem lost his way. While wandering about he came to a clear rivulet, on the banks of which he lay down to take some repose, having first turned Reksh loose into a field of grain. A gardener who had charge of it came and awoke the hero, telling him, in an insolent tone, that he would

soon suffer for his temerity, as the field in which his horse was feeding belonged to a pehloovân, or warrior, called Oulâd. Roostem, always irascible, but particularly so when disturbed in his slumbers, jumped up, tore off the gardener's ears, and gave him a blow with his fist that broke his nose and teeth. 'Take these marks of my temper to your master,' he said, 'and tell him to come here, and he shall have a similar welcome.'

"Oulâd, when informed of what had passed, was excited to fury, and prepared to assail the Persian hero, who, expecting him, had put on his armour, and mounted Reksh. His appearance so dismayed Oulâd, that he dared not venture on the combat till he had summoned his adherents. They all fell upon Roostem at once; but the base-born caitiffs were scattered like chaff before the wind: many were slain, others fled, among whom was their chief. Him Roostem came up with at the fifth stage, and having thrown his noose* over him, took him prisoner.

* The kemend or noose of the ancient Persians appears to be the lasso of the modern South Americans, and was employed to snare prisoners as well as wild cattle. It is

Oulâd, in order to save his life, not only gave him full information of the place where his sovereign was confined, and of the strength of the Deev-e-Seffeed, but offered to give the hero every aid in the accomplishment of his perilous enterprise. This offer was accepted, and he proved a most useful auxiliary.

“ On the sixth day they saw in the distance the city of Mazenderan, near which the Deev-e-Seffeed resided. Two chieftains, with numerous attendants, met them; and one had the audacity to ride up to Roostem, and seize him by the belt. That chief’s fury at this insolence was unbounded; he disdained, however, to use his arms against such an enemy, but seizing the miscreant’s head, wrenched it from the body, and hurled it at his companions, who fled in terror and dismay at this terrible proof of the hero’s prowess.

“ Roostem proceeded, after this action, with a stone, well known and often used in India by some tribes of robbers and murderers of that country, who cast it over the head of the unwary traveller with an expertness that would do credit to a native of the Pampas.

his guide to the castle where the king was confined. The Deevs who guarded it were asleep, and Ky-Kâoos was found in a solitary cell, chained to the ground. He recognised Roostem, and bursting into tears, pressed his deliverer to his bosom. Roostem immediately began to knock off his chains: the noise occasioned by this awoke the Deevs, whose leader, Beedâr-Reng, advanced to seize Roostem; but the appearance and threats of the latter so overawed him, that he consented to purchase his own safety by the instant release of the Persian king and all his followers.

“ After this achievement Roostem proceeded to the last and greatest of his labours, the attack of the Deev-e-Seffeed. Oulâd told him, that the Deevs watched and feasted during the night, but slept during the heat of the day, hating (according to our narrator) the sun-beams. Roostem, as he advanced, saw an immense army drawn out: he thought it better, before he attacked them, to refresh himself by some repose. Having laid himself down, he soon fell into a sound sleep, and at day-light he awoke quite refreshed. As soon as the sun became warm, he rushed into the camp. The heavy blows of

his mace soon awoke the surprised and slumbering guards of the Deev-e-Seffeed: they collected in myriads, hoping to impede his progress; but all in vain. The rout became general, and none escaped but those who fled from the field of battle.

“When this army was dispersed Roostem went in search of the Deev-e-Seffeed, who, ignorant of the fate of his followers, slumbered in the recess of a cavern, the entrance to which looked so dark and gloomy, that the Persian hero hesitated whether he should advance, but the noise of his approach had roused his enemy, who came forth, clothed in complete armour. His appearance was terrible; but Roostem, recommending his soul to God, struck a desperate blow, which separated the leg of the Deev from his body. This,” said Joozee Beg, “would on common occasions have terminated the contest, but far different was the result on the present. Irritated to madness by the loss of a limb, the monster seized his enemy in his arms, and endeavoured to throw him down. The struggle was for some time doubtful; but Roostem, collecting all his strength, by a wonderful effort dashed his foe to the ground, and seizing him

by one of the horns, unsheathed his dagger, and stabbed him to the heart*. The Deev-e-Seffeed instantly expired; and Roostem, on looking round to the entrance of the cavern, from whence the moment before he had seen numberless Deevs issuing to the aid of their lord, perceived they were all dead. Oulâd, who stood at a prudent distance from the scene of combat, now advanced and informed the hero, that the lives of all the Deevs depended upon that of their chief: when he was slain, the spell which created and preserved this band was broken, and they all expired.

“Roostem,” said our narrator, “found little difficulty, after these seven days of toil, of danger, and of glory, in compelling Mazenderan to submit to Persia. The king of the country was slain, and Oulâd was appointed its governor as a reward for his fidelity.

“It would weary you,” said Joozee Beg, “were I to detail all the misfortunes and distresses into which Ky-Kâoos subsequently brought himself, by a pride and folly which were only

* A representation of this combat is given in Dibdin's Decameron, vol. iii. p. 475.

equalled by the wisdom and valour of Zâl and his son Roostem; but one instance will suffice."

Hajee Hoosein, who was in attendance, whispered to me, "It is true, as Sâdee says, 'A wise man does not always know when to begin, but a fool never knows when to stop.'" I smiled, but shook my head, and Joozee proceeded.

"The event I am about to narrate," said he, "appears so wonderful, that I should doubt its truth, if I did not know it was written in the book I before told you of.

"The success of his arms had raised Ky-Kâoos to the very plenitude of power; not only men but Deevs obeyed his mandates. The latter he employed in building palaces of crystal, emeralds, and rubies, till at last they became quite tired of their toil and abject condition. They sought therefore to destroy him; and to effect this they consulted with the devil, who, to forward the object, instructed a Deev, called Dizjkheem, to go to Ky-Kâoos, and raise in his mind a passion for astronomy, and to promise him a nearer view of the celestial bodies than had ever yet been enjoyed by mortal eyes. The

Deev fulfilled his commission with such success, that the king became quite wild with a desire to attain perfection in this sublime science. The devil then instructed Dizjkheem to train some young vultures to carry a throne upwards: this was done by placing spears round the throne, on the points of which pieces of flesh were fixed in view of the vultures who were fastened at the bottom. These voracious birds in their efforts to reach the meat raised the throne—”

Joozee Beg here stopt, seeing me hardly able to suppress a laugh. “ You do not credit this story,” he said. “ You mistake,” I replied ; “ I am only struck with a remarkable coincidence. In a sister kingdom of England, called Ireland, the natives, according to a learned author, trick their horses into a trot, by binding a wisp of hay to the end of a pole to which they are harnessed, and, like your vultures, they constantly strive but never attain their desire : their efforts to reach the food fulfil the object of the ingenious author of this useful invention. He was only a mortal, however, and could do no more than impel a vehicle along the earth ; the scheme of the devil is more sublime, and we shall, I trust,

hear of Ky-Kâoos reaching the seventh heaven !”
 “ He was not so fortunate,” said Joozee Beg ;
 “ for though he mounted rapidly for some time, the vultures became exhausted, and finding their efforts to reach the meat hopeless, discontinued them ; this altered the direction and equilibrium of the machine, and it tossed to and fro. Ky-Kâoos would have been cast headlong and killed had he not clung to it. The vultures not being able to disengage themselves flew an immense way, and at last landed the affrighted monarch in one of the woods of China. Armies marched in every direction to discover and release the sovereign, who, it was believed, had again fallen into the hands of Deevs. He was at last found, and restored to his capital. Roostem, we are told, upbraided his folly, saying

‘ Have you managed your affairs so well on earth
 That you must needs try your hand in those of heaven*?’ ”

Here the tale of wonder ceased, and a learned dissertation commenced upon the genius and writings of Firdousee. It is only justice to this great poet to observe, that the exuberance of his

* “ Too kâr-e-zemeen-râ nikoo sâkktee
 Kih ber kâr-e-âsmân-neeze perdâkhtee.”

fertile imagination, though it led him to amplify and adorn his subject, never made him false to the task he had undertaken—that of embodying in his great work all that remained of the fabulous and historical traditions and writings of his country. We cannot have a stronger proof of his adherence to this principle than his passing over, almost in silence, the four centuries which elapsed between the death of Alexander the Great and the rise of Ardesheer or Artaxerxes, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty. Adverting to the history of the Parthian kings, he observes, “When both their root and branches ceased to flourish, their deeds remained unrecorded by any experienced historian; and nothing but their names have I either heard or perused in the annals of the kings of Persia.”

I mentioned to my friends, as we were leaving the ruins, the reflections which occurred to me on these points, anticipating their approbation of the justice I did Firdousee, but I was disappointed. Mahomed Hoosein, the Indian Moon-shee, alone seemed to concur. “It is very just,” was pronounced by him in an under tone. Meerzâ Aga Meer said faintly, “Perhaps you are right.” Khan Sahib had a half-suppressed

smile at the scrape he saw I was in, from my qualified praise of the popular historian, as well as poet, of Persia ; while almost all the natives of that country, and there were many of the party, evidently considered my criticism as bordering on want of faith in an author whom they had almost worshipped from infancy. I overheard Hajee Hoosein, to whom all the lesser persons in the mission listen as to an oracle, whisper to one of his friends, “ Sâdee says, ‘ A wise man does not bring a candle to light the sun.’ ”

I left Persepolis with regret that my visit was so short ; but the same ardent desire to examine this celebrated ruin was not felt by all our party. One of my companions, now no more, a gallant soldier and most devoted sportsman, was induced, by the game he found on the neighbouring plain, to delay his inspection of the palace of Jemsheed to the last day of our stay. On the morning we went to bid farewell to these remains of ancient grandeur, he promised to follow, but never came. When we interrogated him as to the cause, he answered with that simplicity which belonged to his manly character, “ I could not help it : I was on the way, but

found a fine duck in the stream that runs from the mountain ; it flew in a contrary direction, and I had to follow it several miles before I got a shot. "There it is," said he, pointing to the bird which lay beside his gun, in a corner of the tent.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRAVELLERS AND ANTIQUARIES—WILD ASS—HAWK-
ING—MADER-E-SULIMAN—AKLEED—MIRRORS—
MEHDEE KHAN—ISFAHAN—PERSIAN CITIZENS
AND PEASANTRY—SHAH ABBAS THE GREAT—
HAROON-OOR-RASHEED—NETHENZ.

THE love of travel, visiting the remains of former grandeur, and of tracing the history of ancient nations, which is so common in Europe, causes wonder in the Asiatics, amongst whom there is little or no spirit of curiosity or speculation. Men who live in ill-governed and unquiet communities can spare no time for such objects from the active occupations incident to their place in society. In better regulated and more settled governments, the state, by divesting men of all immediate care respecting life and property, almost compels those of its subjects whose minds are active, and whose time is at their own disposal, to provide for themselves such a portion of vicissitude and trouble as shall overcome that apathy and inertness into which they might otherwise fall. From these motives they court

toil and care, and sometimes danger, to make them relish the feast of existence.

Some gentlemen had accompanied the mission whose chief object was to see Persepolis and other remains of ancient splendour. These motives were unintelligible to the Persians. The day we left the ruins, Aga Meer, as we were riding together, expressed his surprise at men devoting their time to such pursuits. "What can be the use," said he, "of travelling so far and running so many risks to look at ruined houses and palaces, when they might stay so comfortably at home?" I replied, with some feeling of contempt for my friend's love of quiet, "If the state of a man's circumstances, or that of his country, does not find him work, he must find it for himself, or go to sleep and be good for nothing. Antiquaries," I continued, "to whose praiseworthy researches you allude, by directing, through their labours and talents, our attention to the great names and magnificent monuments of former days, aid in improving the sentiments and taste of a nation. Besides, though no antiquary myself, I must ever admire a study which carries man beyond self. I love those elevating thoughts that lead me to dwell with delight on

the past, and to look forward with happy anticipations to the future. We are told by some that such feelings are mere illusions, and the cold practical philosopher may, on the ground of their inutility, desire to remove them from men's minds, to make way for his own machinery; but he could as soon argue me out of my existence as take from me the internal proof which such feelings convey, both as to my origin and destination."

"There goes a Goor-kher" (wild ass), said Mahomed Beg, the Jelloodâr*, who was riding close behind; and away he galloped. Away I galloped also, leaving unfinished one of the finest speeches about the past and the future that was ever commenced.

We pursued the Goor-kher several miles, when we gave up the chase as hopeless. On our return, however, we found plenty of other game; five hares were killed by our dogs and three by hawks. When at Shiraz, the Elchee had received a present of a very fine Shâh-Bâz, or royal falcon. Before going out I had been amused at seeing Nutee Beg, our head falconer,

* Persian groom.

a man of great experience in his department, put upon this bird a pair of leathers, which he fitted to its thighs with as much care as if he had been the tailor of a fashionable horseman. I inquired the reason of so unusual a proceeding. “You will learn that,” said the consequential master of the hawks, “when you see our sport:” and I was convinced, at the period he predicted, of the old fellow’s knowledge of his business.

The first hare seized by the falcon was very strong, and the ground rough. While the bird kept the claws of one foot fastened in the back of its prey, the other was dragged along the ground till it had an opportunity to lay hold of a tuft of grass, by which it was enabled to stop the course of the hare, whose efforts to escape, I do think, would have torn the hawk asunder, if it had not been provided with the leathern defences which have been mentioned.

The next time the falcon was flown gave us a proof of that extraordinary courage which its whole appearance, and particularly its eye, denoted. It had stopt and quite disabled the second hare by the first pounce, when two greyhounds, which had been slipped by mistake,

came up, and endeavoured to seize it. They were, however, repulsed by the falcon, whose boldness and celerity in attacking the dogs and securing its prey excited our admiration and astonishment.

We had some excellent sport with smaller hawks at partridges. I was particularly pleased with one bird which kept hovering over our heads till the game was sprung, and then descending like a shot, struck its prey to the ground.

We made three marches from Persepolis before we came to any remarkable place; we then reached some ruins called Mâder-e-Sûlimân, or the mother of Solomon. These have been almost as much dwelt upon by travellers as those of Persepolis, and conjectures are equally various. Many insist that this is the tomb of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the wife of David, and mother of Solomon. To this the only objection is, the belief or fact that neither Solomon nor his mother were ever within a thousand miles of this spot while living, and therefore it was unlikely to be chosen as the burial-place of the latter when dead. Another account states it to be the tomb of Sûlimân, the tenth caliph of the race of Ali;

but against this conclusion there is decisive evidence in the very ancient style of the architecture and the inscriptions, which are in the arrow-headed character. Some antiquaries, puzzled by these objections, have gone back to remote ages, and determined it to be Pasargadæ, the resting-place of Cyrus. I could only stay a few hours at this tomb, otherwise this very important question might have been decided.

The next place on our route meriting notice is the village of Akleed, where the first mission halted for some days. It is situated in a beautiful valley, surrounded by hills and watered by clear rivulets. The gardens and groves in this town and its vicinity give it an inviting appearance to a traveller in Persia, which, with the exception of Mazenderan*, and other provinces on the Caspian, may generally be described as an arid country, without one great river, and with few perennial streams†.

If the report of the inhabitants of Akleed is to be believed, disease is almost unknown. A

* The ancient Hyrcania.

† In Persia the term rood-khâneh, or, the bed of a stream, is the common word for a river; an idiom which has probably arisen from the fact stated.

man upwards of eighty, who was praising the place to me, said, "We die of old age, but seldom from other causes. Then look round and see what a charming place it is. I have heard a Moollâh assert," he added, "that our town is called Akleed or Kaleed (the key), and, on account of its beauty and salubrity, is considered as a key to paradise."

"But you suffer from oppression like others?" "Why," said he, "we are not exempt from troubles, but these come only now and then, whilst we always enjoy our pleasant habitations. We were in terrible alarm," he continued, "when we first heard of your approach: we were told that the Elchee was carrying a number of pier-glasses of immense* dimensions, as a present to the king; and that the inhabitants of the country, between Abusheher and Shiraz, were not only seized and compelled to carry these mirrors, but that all the principal men in the villages through which they had passed were to be sent to Teheran and punished, because some of them had been broken."

"This you may suppose occasioned no small

* Some of these mirrors exceeded eight feet in length.

fright, particularly as we knew the Elchee's Mehmandar would take advantage of the pretext of carrying these presents to commit every species of extortion. You may therefore conceive our joy to hear that the Elchee, to save the inhabitants from such sufferings, had resolved to have the mirrors carried by mules. We were, however, not quite relieved from our fears till the whole passed through this place some days ago. Every mirror in its case was like a Tekht-e-Revân (or travelling litter), with shafts before and behind for the mules, by which it was carried. Then, besides twenty or thirty Ferrâshes to take care of these precious glasses, there was a party of horse to protect them; and the Elchee's head-carpenter, Randall Beg*, dressed like one of us, and with a fine beard, rode at the head of the cavalcade."

The story of the old chronicler of Akleed was

* Mr. Randall, who is here alluded to, was a very ingenious carpenter, who had been in an English man-of-war employed in discoveries. He had been in the habit of mixing with the natives of the places he visited, and was on this occasion of great use; for the Persian artizans, employed under his directions, worked with more zeal and readiness, from his dressing like them and living amongst them.

perfectly correct; and what was more uncommon in a Persian narration, no way exaggerated. The Elchee, though he incurred considerable expense in providing for the carriage of these unwieldy but valuable articles, acquired more popularity, by the relief he gave to the poorer inhabitants on his route by this act, and by insisting on paying for the Soorsât, or provisions furnished to the mission, than by any others during his residence in Persia.

We passed several large camps of Eelyâts in our march between Persepolis and Isfahan. I had formerly seen enough of this race to satisfy me, that even the lowest of them were not only in a condition which freed them from want, but that they enjoyed a consideration in the community, or rather family, to which they belonged, that could not but contribute to their happiness. Their union and their bold character gives to this class of the population of Persia great security; and even when the tribe happens from political motives to be divided, which is often the case, the spirit of individuals remains unbroken; and if they are of a race which has reputation for courage and attachment, it is not unfrequent to see them in the service of

those by whom they have been subdued; nor do they in such case conceal the hostile feelings they still cherish against their conquerors, who are usually indifferent to the sentiments they entertain or express, while in their service, trusting for their fidelity to certain ties and principles, which, as connected with personal honour, are seldom violated by men of this description.

These reflections forcibly recurred to my mind, from a conversation I had, the day we left Ak-leed, with an old soldier of the tribe of Mâaffee, who was in the service of our Mehmandar.

“ I have seen,” said he to me, “ nearly the whole of the contest between the families of Zend and Kajir. I belong to a tribe firmly attached to the former—I fought for them. Our princes were heroes in action, but they wanted judgment; besides fortune deserted them, and favoured these cruel Kajirs.” I looked round; and observing my surprise, he instantly exclaimed, “ What do I care who knows my sentiments? Was ever man more cruel than Aga Mahomed Khan! did not his wanton atrocities exceed all belief! I will tell you one,” he added, “ that I myself witnessed.

“After the last and bravest of our princes, Lootf Ali Khan, was betrayed and barbarously put to death; his Meerzâ, a respectable Syed of the family of the Prophet, was brought before Aga Mahomed. ‘Why did you dare,’ said the enraged monarch, ‘to write me fermâns *?’ ‘I did so,’ said the Meerzâ, ‘because the fear of Lootf Ali Khan, who was near me, was at the moment greater than of you, who were distant; but I trust to your clemency for pardon.’ ‘Cut off his hands and put out his eyes!’ was the savage mandate, which was immediately obeyed.

“Next morning this Meerzâ’s son was brought a prisoner to camp. He was sent for by the king, who addressing him, said, ‘Go to your father; tell him the Prophet has reproached me for my injustice to him; I will do what I can to make amends: what does he want?’ ‘To go and pass the remainder of his life at the tomb of the holy Ali at Kerbela,’ said the youth. ‘Let him depart,’ replied the king, ‘as soon as his wounds will permit; give him from me these three hundred tomans, and say, that horses, mules, and tents will be provided for his accommodation. Inform

* Fermân means a command, and signifies here a letter or mandate addressed by a superior to an inferior.

him, I have repented of my inconsiderate violence, and ask him to pray for me.'

"Now," said my friend, the Mâaffee, "many think Aga Mahomed was sincere in his remorse ; but I believe he was only cunning. He saw that every one was shocked at his horrible treatment of a holy Syed, and he was anxious to regain their good opinion. Nobody knew so well as that wily fox how to manage men. But after all," he concluded, "bad as he was in other respects, he was the soldier's friend, and so far better than his nephew and successor."

"Assuredly," said I, "you cannot accuse the present king of cruelty ; he appears to me remarkable for his lenity." "What is the use of his lenity, if he neither gives his soldiers money himself, nor allows them to take it from others ? These Kajirs," he continued, in no under tone, and with fifty people within hearing, "are a sad set, and we shall never have good times again while they keep the throne."

Next day I spoke privately to this old soldier, and told him I was afraid he might do himself injury by the manner in which he had so openly expressed himself. "Do not be alarmed," he said ; "there is now no prince of the Zend

family in Persia to compete for the crown. The Kajirs and their adherents, therefore, take little heed of language that can do no harm ; besides, the king is, as you say, a merciful man, and he has the good sense to know he cannot alter the feelings of tribes like ours. He knows, also, that however we may talk, we shall prove true to those we serve, provided we are treated with confidence and consideration."

The first mission had halted at the village of Taaghoon, within a short distance of Isfahan, where we met a chief called Meerzâ Mehdee Khan, who had served under Lord Clive in Bengal. He spoke in raptures of that great man ; from whom, as well as from General Carnac and others, he produced testimonials highly honourable to his character. He had retired, with the fortune he made in India, to this, his native village. I was particularly pleased with this old gentleman, and on our second mission I inquired for him, but regretted to find he had been dead two years. His son had succeeded to his property and situation as head of Taaghoon, and appeared, from his conduct, to have inherited his father's sentiments of regard for the English.

Nothing can exceed, in beauty and fertility,

the country in the vicinity of Isfahan, and the first appearance of that city is very imposing. All that is noble meets the eye : the groves, avenues, and spreading orchards, with which it abounds, concealing the ruins of this once famed capital. A nearer view, however, dispels the illusion ; but still much remains of wealth, if not of splendour, and, were I so disposed, I might write a volume on its beautiful environs, its palaces, splendid even in decay, its college, with massy gates of silver, its magnificent bridges, its baths, its arched bazars, its fountains, its far-famed river Zindeh-rood, and the gardens on its banks, shaded with lofty sycamores, and filled with every flower and fruit of the temperate zone.

When the patience of the reader was exhausted by a minute description of all the beauties and bounties which art and nature have lavished on Isfahan, there would still remain to be described its two hundred thousand inhabitants, more than half of whom poured forth in their gayest attire to the *istikbâl*, or meeting with the *Elchee*, the day we entered this renowned city.

A few days after our arrival the governor gave the *Elchee* an entertainment, which began, as usual, with sweetmeats and fruit ; and after pipes,

coffee, tumbling, wrestling, and fireworks, a sumptuous dinner was served up. Another day we were invited to breakfast with my old friend Hajee Ibrahim Kâledoonnee, who gave us milk prepared in seventy-two different ways, being, as Hajee Hoosein whispered me, in accordance with the seventy-two sects in the religion of Mahomed. Whether there was such a design or not I cannot say, but the fare was admirable, and I was delighted to find my friend, who is, besides being an extensive farmer, a *ketkhûdâ*, or magistrate, of the ward of Kâledoon in Isfahan, the same plain-dressed, plain-spoken, humorous person we had left him ten years before. He took us, as he had formerly done, to the wonder of his quarter, the shaking minarets*. When a person mounts to the top of one of these, and moves his body, it vibrates, and the vibration is imparted to the other, though at a distance of about forty feet, the width of the mosque to which they belong.

While my companions were trying this experiment, and wondering at the cause, I remained

* The minarets of the Mahomedan mosques are, like the steeples of our churches, of all sizes; those we visited were of ordinary dimensions.

on the terrace conversing with Hajee Ibrahim. I noticed a small village about a mile distant which seemed deserted. "Is that oppression?" said I. "No," said the Hajee, "worse." "Why," said I, "the Tûrkûmâns cannot have carried their inroads so near the town." "They could not have done the work so complete," said my friend, smiling. "Who has done it?" I asked. "A doctor," replied he; "a proper fellow, who acquired great reputation, and he deserved it, from the heirs of his patients at least. That village literally perished under his hands in five years. Now he is gone I know not where, but good luck attend him, so he comes not again to our neighbourhood."

I went with some of our party to several of the principal hemmâms or baths of Isfahan. That of Khoosroo Aga I think one of the best I have seen. When the first mission came to Persia, doubts were entertained whether we could be permitted this luxury. Fortunately for us the point was deemed one, not merely connected with comfort, but with that respect which it was desirous we should receive from the natives of the country; and viewing it in this light, the Elchee, by a well-timed liberality, con-

verted impure infidels into favoured guests, who, instead of being excluded, were, at every town, solicited to honour with their presence the public baths.

The inhabitants of Isfahan are reputed quick and intelligent. They, like those of other large cities in Persia, differ much, both in appearance and character, from the peasantry who dwell in the villages. The latter, though I saw none in actual poverty, seemed from their appearance rarely to have any superabundance of even the necessaries of life. Though neither so well lodged, clothed, nor fed as the citizens of large towns, and perhaps occasionally subjected to more oppression, I always found, when I talked to them, that they preferred their actual condition ; and though often loud and bold in their complaints of their superiors, they appear a cheerful and robust race *.

The food of the Eelyâts is derived principally from their flocks, and they eat, with their cheese and curds, hard black bread made from barley

* I have been informed by one who had personal means of making the comparison, that he considered the general condition of the Persian peasantry to be fully equal if not superior to that of the same class in Russia or Poland.

and rye. The villagers in the cultivated plains have less animal food, but more of wheaten bread, fowls, eggs, vegetables, and fruits. Both these classes are equally uninstructed; the wandering tribes despise learning, and the inhabitants of hamlets and villages have seldom an opportunity of acquiring it.

In the larger towns, and particularly those in which there are manufactories, the case is very different; the inhabitants are generally well clothed, and their whole appearance indicates that they live in comfort. There are in all such towns numerous schools, and in the principal ones colleges. At Isfahan almost every man above the very lowest order can read and write, and artisans and shopkeepers are often as familiar as those of the higher ranks with the works of their favourite poets. The love of such learning seems, in some of the youth of this city, to degenerate into a disease. These Tâlib-ool-Ilm, or seekers of science, as the students are called, may be seen in crowds round the gates, or within the walls of its college, reciting stanzas, or discussing obscure dogmas or doctrines in their works on philosophy or religion, and they often

become, from such habits, unfitted for every other pursuit in life.

The population of Isfahan, notwithstanding such exceptions, may be described as an active industrious people. They are considered the best manufacturers and the worst soldiers in Persia. But whatever may be their deportment in the field of battle, they are remarkable for the boldness of their language in the field of argument, and have great confidence in their ready wit and talent for repartee.

Some years ago, this city was governed by a brother of the celebrated Hajee Ibrahim, whose family at that time held several of the first offices in the kingdom ; and I heard that minister tell the Elchee the following anecdote :

A shopkeeper, he said, went to his brother to represent that he could not pay an impost. "You must pay it, like others," said the governor, or leave the city." "Where can I go?" asked the man. "To Shiraz or Cashan." "Your nephew rules the one city, and your brother the other." "Go to the king and complain, if you like." "Your brother the Hajee is prime minister." "Then go to hell," said the en-

raged governor. “Hajee Merhoom, the pious pilgrim, your father, is dead—” retorted the undaunted Isfahânee. “My friend,” said the governor, bursting into a laugh, “I will pay the impost myself, since you declare my family keeps you from all redress, both in this world and the next.”

The merchants of Persia form a distinct class. I had now seen those of Abusheher, Shiraz, and Isfahan, and found their general character nearly the same.

So long as they have no concern with state affairs, and accept of no employment from government, they enjoy considerable security. The plunder of a merchant, without some pretext, would shake all confidence, and be fatal to that commerce from which a great proportion of the public revenue is derived; the most tyrannical monarchs therefore have seldom committed so impolitic an act of injustice. But this class have suffered so severely in the late revolutions of the country that they continue to act with great caution. They are not only very circumspect in their dealings, but, like wary diplomatists, every merchant has a cipher, known only to himself and his correspondents. By this means

they receive and convey that intelligence which is essential to give safety to their speculations. Some few make a display of their wealth ; but in general their habits are not merely frugal, but penurious. This disposition often increases with age to a degree that would hardly be credited if we had not similar instances in our own country.

The popular impression is so strong on this subject, that they relate the following story as a fact, to exemplify it :

A merchant who had lately died at Isfahan, and left a large sum of money, was so great a niggard, that for many years he denied himself and his son, a young boy, every support, except a crust of coarse bread. He was, however, one day tempted by the description a friend gave of the flavour of cheese to buy a small piece ; but before he got home he began to reproach himself with extravagance, and instead of eating the cheese he put it into a bottle, and contented himself, and obliged his child to do the same, with rubbing the crust against the bottle, enjoying the cheese in imagination.

One day that he returned home later than usual, he found his son eating his crust, and

rubbing it against the door. “What are you about, you fool?” was his exclamation. “It is dinner-time, father; you have the key, so I could not open the door;—I was rubbing my bread against it, because I could not get to the bottle.” “Cannot you go without cheese one day, you luxurious little rascal? you’ll never be rich!” added the angry miser, as he kicked the poor boy for not being able to deny himself the ideal gratification.

Our stay at Isfahan was short. I regretted this the less, as I had, on the former mission, full time to trace those remains of the splendour of the Seffavean kings, which are still to be found at this their favourite capital. The names of almost all these monarchs are now forgotten, excepting that of Shah Abbas the Great, who, in Persia, is not only the builder of all bridges, *cârâvânserâis*, and palaces, but his name is associated with all good sayings, liberal acts, and deeds of arms. I was really quite tired with hearing of this most gallant, most sage, most witty, and most munificent monarch, at his seat of glory; and when sixty miles to the northward of that city, we were entering the delightful little town of Nethenz, which lies in a nar-

row valley between two high mountains, I said to myself, “ Well, we are now, thank God, clear of Abbas and his grand palaces; this scene of repose abounds in beauties for which he had no taste.”

Hajee Hoosein, who was riding near me, said, as if he had read my thoughts, “ This is a charming place, and the inhabitants are remarkable for their wit, as well as for their pears, peaches, and pretty ladies. When Abbas the Great—” I pulled up my horse, and looked at him with a countenance that indicated any thing but anxiety for his story; but not observing, or not choosing to observe, he continued:— “ When Abbas the Great was hunting in this valley, he met, one morning as the day dawned, an uncommonly ugly man, at the sight of whom his horse started. Being nearly dismounted, and deeming it a bad omen, he called out in a rage to have his head struck off. The poor peasant whom they had seized, and were on the point of executing, prayed that he might be informed of his crime.—‘ Your crime,’ said the king, ‘ is your unlucky countenance, which is the first object I saw this morning, and which had nearly caused me to fall from my horse.’

‘Alas!’ said the man, ‘by this reckoning, what term must I apply to your majesty’s countenance, which was the first object my eyes met this morning, and which is to cause my death!’ The king smiled at the wit of the reply, ordered the man to be released, and gave him a present instead of taking off his head.”

“Well,” said I, when the Hajee had finished, “I am glad I have heard this story, for it proves your Abbas was, with all his fine qualities, a capricious and cruel tyrant.” “No doubt he was,” said my friend, “like other men in his condition, spoilt by the exercise of despotic power. He had violent bursts of passion, but these were not frequent; and then he used to be very sorry for what he did when in one of his paroxysms; and what more could be expected from a Shâhin-shâh, or king of kings? There,” said he, as we entered Nethenz,—“There is an instance of the truth of what I say; you see that little dome on the summit of the hill which overhangs the town. It is called Goombez-e-Bâz, or the dome of the hawk. It happened one day that this monarch, fatigued with hunting, had sat down on the top of that hill with a favourite hawk on his hand; he called

for some water, and a cup was brought from a neighbouring spring; the hawk dashed the cup from the king's hand as he was about to drink; another was sent for, but the bird managed to spill it likewise; a third and a fourth shared the same fate. The monarch, in a rage, killed the hawk. Before he had time to take another cup, one of his attendants noticed that the water was discoloured. This gave rise to suspicions; and the spring was found to have been poisoned with the venom of a snake or some plant. Shah Abbas, inconsolable at his rashness in destroying the bird which had saved his life, built this dome to its memory, and is said to have often visited it."

After hearing this story, I was obliged, lest I should have more anecdotes of this mighty monarch, to confess that, though not a character exactly suited to my notions, there must be some merit in a human being who, in spite of his ordering a man to be slain because he had an ugly face that frightened a horse, and killing a hawk for spilling a cup of water, had contrived to raise his country to such a pitch of prosperity, that he was beloved, as well as feared, when alive, and spoken of for centuries

after his decease as the author of all improvements.

The caliph Hâroon-oor-Rasheed occupies the same place in the stories of the Arabians which Shah Abbas does among the Persians; but the “Arabian Nights” have made the English reader familiar with the celebrated Commander of the Faithful, which no similar work has done for the sovereign of Persia. The fame of the latter, even in his native country, has not excluded Hâroon, whom I have always found in works on the wisdom, moderation, and justice of monarchs, to occupy a very prominent place in Persian literature.

Aga Meer brought me one day a small tract, containing an account of a visit of Hâroon to the tomb of Noosheerwân, which was, he said, from the lessons it conveyed, given to the youth of Persia to study. I perused it with pleasure; and shall give a translation of a part of its contents, as a specimen both of the moral maxims of this country and the mode in which a knowledge of them is imparted.

“The caliph Hâroon-oor-Rasheed,” says the author, “went to visit the tomb of the celebrated Noosheerwân, the most famous of all

the monarchs who ever governed Persia. Before the tomb was a curtain of gold cloth, which, when Hâroon touched it, fell to pieces. The walls of the tomb were covered with gold and jewels, whose splendour illumined its darkness. The body was placed in a sitting posture on a throne enchased with jewels, and had so much the appearance of life, that, on the first impulse, the Commander of the Faithful bent to the ground, and saluted the remains of the just Noosheerwân.

“ Though the face of the departed monarch was like that of a living man, and the whole of the body in a state of preservation, which showed the admirable skill of those who embalmed it; yet when the caliph touched the garments they mouldered into dust. Hâroon upon this took his own rich robes and threw them over the corpse: he also hung up a new curtain richer than that he had destroyed, and perfumed the whole tomb with camphor, and other sweet scents.

“ It was remarked that no change was perceptible in the body of Noosheerwân, except that the ears had become white. The whole scene affected the caliph greatly; he burst into tears,

and repeated from the Koran—‘What I have seen is a warning to those who have eyes.’ He observed some writing upon the throne, which he ordered the Moobids*, who were learned in the Pehlevee language, to read and explain. They did so: it was as follows:

‘This world remains not; the man who thinks least of it is the wisest.

‘Enjoy this world before thou becomest its prey.

‘Bestow the same favour on those below thee, as thou desirest to receive from those above thee.

‘If thou shouldst conquer the whole world, death will at last conquer thee.

‘Be careful that thou art not the dupe of thine own fortune.

‘Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done; no more, no less.’

“The caliph observed a dark ruby-ring on the finger of Noosheerwân, on which was written,

‘Avoid cruelty, study good, and never be precipitate in action.

‘If thou shouldst live for a hundred years, never for one moment forget death.

‘Value above all things the society of the wise.’

* Moobid is the Persian term for a priest of the fire-worshippers.

“ Around the right arm of Noosheerwân was a clasp of gold, on which was engraved,

‘ On a certain year, on the 10th day of the month Erdebehisht*, a caliph of the race of Adean, professing the faith of Mahomed, accompanied by four good men, and one bad, shall visit my tomb.’

“ Below this sentence were the names of the forefathers of the caliph. Another prophecy was added concerning Hâroon’s pilgrimage to Noosheerwân’s tomb.

‘ This prince will honour me, and do good unto me, though I have no claim upon him; and he will clothe me in a new vest, and besprinkle my tomb with sweet-scented essences, and then depart unto his home. But the bad man who accompanies him shall act treacherously towards me. I pray that God may send one of my race to repay the great favours of the caliph, and to take vengeance on his unworthy companion. There is, under my throne, an inscription, which the caliph must read and contemplate. Its contents will remind him of me, and make him pardon my inability to give him more.’

“ The caliph, on hearing this, put his hand

* The name of one of the months in the ancient Persian calendar.

under the throne, and found the inscription, which consisted of some lines, inscribed on a ruby as large as the palm of the hand. The Moobids read this also. It contained information where would be found concealed a treasure of gold and arms, with some caskets of rich jewels : under this was written,

‘ These I give to the caliph in return for the good he has done me; let him take them and be happy.’

“ When Hâroon-oor-Rasheed was about to leave the tomb, Hoosein-ben-Sâhil his vizier said to him, ‘ O lord of the faithful, what is the use of all these precious gems which ornament the abode of the dead, and are of no benefit to the living? Allow me to take some of them.’ The caliph replied with indignation, ‘ Such a wish is more worthy of a thief than of a great or wise man.’ Hoosein was ashamed of his speech, and said to the servant who had been placed at the entrance of the tomb, ‘ Go thou and worship the holy shrine within.’ The man went into the tomb; he was above a hundred years old, but he had never seen such a blaze of wealth. He felt inclined to plunder some of it, but was at first afraid : at last, sum-

moning all his courage, he took a ring from the finger of Noosheerwân, and came away.

“Hâroon saw this man come out, and observing him alarmed, he at once conjectured what he had been doing. Addressing those around him, he said, ‘Do not you now see the extent of the knowledge of Noosheerwân? He prophesied that there should be one unworthy man with me; it is this fellow: what have you taken?’ said he, in an angry tone. ‘Nothing,’ said the man. ‘Search him,’ said the caliph. It was done, and the ring of Noosheerwân was found. This the caliph immediately took, and entering the tomb, replaced it on the cold finger of the deceased monarch. When he returned, a terrible sound, like that of loud thunder, was heard.

“Hâroon came down from the mountain on which the tomb stood, and ordered the road to be made inaccessible to future curiosity. He searched for, and found, in the place described, the gold, the arms, and the jewels bequeathed to him by Noosheerwân, and sent them to Bagdad.

“Among the rich articles found was a golden crown, which had five sides, and was richly ornamented with precious stones. On every side a

number of admirable lessons were written. The most remarkable were as follows.

First side.

‘ Give my regards to those who know themselves.

‘ Consider the end before you begin, and before you advance provide a retreat.

‘ Give not unnecessary pain to any man, but study the happiness of all.

‘ Ground not your dignity upon your power to hurt others.’

Second side.

‘ Take counsel before you commence any measure, and never trust its execution to the inexperienced.

‘ Sacrifice your property for your life, and your life for your religion.

‘ Spend your time in establishing a good name; and if you desire fortune, learn contentment.’

Third side.

‘ Grieve not for that which is broken, stolen, burnt, or lost.

‘ Never give orders in another man’s house; and accustom yourself to eat your bread at your own table.

‘ Make not yourself the captive of women.’

Fourth side.

Take not a wife from a bad family, and seat not thyself with those who have no shame.

‘ Keep thyself at a distance from those who are incorrigible in bad habits, and hold no intercourse with that man who is insensible to kindness.

‘ Covet not the goods of others.

‘ Be guarded with monarchs, for they are like fire, which blazeth but destroyeth.

‘ Be sensible to your own value ; estimate justly the worth of others ; and war not with those who are far above thee in fortune.’

Fifth side.

‘ Fear kings, women, and poets.

‘ Be envious of no man, and habituate not thyself to search after the faults of others.

‘ Make it a habit to be happy, and avoid being out of temper, or thy life will pass in misery.

‘ Respect and protect the females of thy family.

‘ Be not the slave of anger ; and in thy contests always leave open the door of conciliation.

‘ Never let your expenses exceed your income.

‘ Plant a young tree, or you cannot expect to cut down an old one.

‘ Stretch your legs no farther than the size of your carpet.’

“ The caliph Hâroon-oor-Rasheed was more pleased with the admirable maxims inscribed on this crown than with all the treasures he had found. ‘ Write these precepts,’ he exclaimed, ‘ in a book, that the faithful may eat of the fruit

of wisdom.' When he returned to Bagdad, he related to his favourite vizier, Jaffier Bermekee, and his other chief officers, all that had passed; and the shade of Noorsheerwân was propitiated by the disgrace of Hoosein-ben-Sâhil (who had recommended despoiling his tomb), and the exemplary punishment of the servant who had committed the sacrilegious act of taking the ring from the finger of the departed monarch."

Hâroon-oor-Rasheed, with all his fame for clemency, generosity, and justice, appears from the very pages written to raise his fame, to have had, like Shah Abbas, his unlucky moments, when all his virtues were obscured by acts of violent and cruel injustice. Witness his putting to death the celebrated vizier, Jaffier Bermekee, and his vain efforts to rob the memory of that virtuous and great minister of his just fame.

Aga Meer related to me, after we had finished our translation, the following story, which I must add, though I hate dwelling long upon any of these eastern characters, however wonderful.

"Hâroon-oor-Rasheed," said the good Meerza, "when he had put to death the celebrated Jaffier Bermekee, not contented with this cruelty, wished to deprive him of those encomiums which

the extraordinary virtues of that minister had merited ; and he published an order making it death for any of the preachers or public speakers to mention the name of Jaffier. This did not deter an old Arab from descanting with great eloquence on the virtues of the deceased ; he was warned of his danger, but despised it ; and on being taken and carried to the place of execution, all he asked was to see the caliph for a few minutes. This was granted. The monarch asked him how he came to disregard his laws. ‘ Had I not praised Jaffier,’ said the fearless Arab, ‘ I should have been a monster of ingratitude, and unworthy the protection of any laws.’ ‘ Why ?’ said the caliph. ‘ I came,’ replied the Arab, ‘ poor and friendless to Bagdad. I lodged in a ruin in the skirts of the town, where Jaffier discovered me. Pleased, as he afterwards told me, with my conversation, he paid me frequent visits. One night I was seized and hurried away I knew not whither. In the morning I found myself in a magnificent Hemmâm, and after bathing, was dressed by men in fine robes, who called themselves my slaves. I was then mounted on a horse with costly trappings, and conducted to an elegant palace, where attendants, richly attired,

welcomed me as their lord. Recovered from my astonishment, I asked what all this meant. ‘The habitation of a Fakeer*,’ said I, ‘suits me better than this place; not a corner of one of its saloons but is sufficient for my lodging; besides, I could not remain happy, even in paradise, if absent from my dear wife and children.’ ‘Your lordship’s family,’ said one of the servants, ‘are in the inner apartments.’ I was conveyed to them, and found their adventures had been similar to mine. They were surrounded by female slaves.

“While we were expressing our mutual astonishment, Jaffier was announced, and I found my old visitor in the ruin, and Jaffier the vizier of the great caliph, one and the same person. I endeavoured to make him change his resolution of raising me to a rank for which I had no desire, and thought my character unsuited: he was however inflexible. ‘You conquered me in an argument,’ said he, ‘on happiness being increased with the increased power a virtuous man possesses of doing good. You shall now have an opportunity of putting in

* Religious mendicant.

practice all those plans of beneficence to others which have hitherto only employed your imagination. I have ever since,' said the Arab, 'lived in affluence; my friendship with Jaffier only ended with his life: to him I owe all I possess; and was it possible for me to be deterred by death itself from doing justice to his memory?'

"Though the caliph's pride was hurt, he could not withhold his esteem from a man of such courageous virtue. Instead of ordering him to be executed, he endeavoured to gain his admiration by more splendid generosity than Jaffier. 'Take that,' said he, giving him his sceptre, which was virgin gold, studded with rich jewels. 'I take it,' said the grateful and undaunted Arab; 'but this, also, commander of the faithful, is from Bermekee.'"

Before quitting Nethenz I accompanied the Elchee in a ride through its streets and gardens, which are so intermingled as to give it a singular and pleasing appearance: you can scarcely tell whether you are in the town or the country. We saw plenty of the pears and peaches, for which my friend told me it was famous. As to its pretty ladies, they saw us, no doubt, through

the trellis-work of their dark veils, while we could only dwell upon their beauties with the eyes of our imagination.

I complained to my friend, Khan Sahib, of the privation of the innocent pleasure of gazing upon the features of a lovely female ; and then I added, “ What a mortification must it be for the lady to have her charms denied that tribute of admiration which is their due ! ” “ True,” answered my little friend ; “ it is very hard upon a few, but then think how much numbers owe to that veil, which conceals age and ugliness, as well as youth and beauty. I once,” he observed, “ fell violently in love with one of these veiled ladies, whom I saw sometimes at a window, and sometimes gliding like a phantom through the streets. She continued, for a month, to occupy all my waking thoughts, and the image of her beauties disturbed my rest. I first cast love-tokens into her windows, in the shape of nosegays ; then I persuaded an old woman to pour out all the raptures of my soul at the feet of the object of my devotion. To make a long story short, I was at last promised an interview. I waited with impatience for the moment of anticipated delight. When admitted into the pre-

sence of my fair I became wild with joy ; I praised her shape, the sweetness of her melodious voice, the captivating graces of her manner, and above all, her beautiful face. She long resisted my entreaties to remove her veil. This I deplored in the words of Hâfiz, exclaiming,

‘ O alas* ! O alas ! and O alas ! that such a moon should be concealed behind a cloud.’

“ What with prose, poetry, and flattery,” added Khan Sahib, “ I succeeded at last. Would to God I had not ! but perhaps it has done me good : for what I saw of my imaginary angel has reconciled me for life to veils and clouds.”

As we were talking we arrived at a citadel which was the residence of the old Hâkim, or governor Hajee Abd-ool-Câsim, to whom the Elchee paid a visit. We were received in a room at the top of one of the highest turrets, from whence we had a commanding view of the surrounding scenery. Nothing could be more singular or beautiful. The valley of Nethenz, which is inclosed by mountains, is itself a succession of eminences and small hills. The fruitful gardens,

* Ei dereeghâ, ei dereeghâ, oo ei dereegh ! kih hem-choo mâh pinhân shoodzeer-e-meegh .

which occupied every spot where there were no houses, extended eight miles. Seldom above one, and never more than two of these gardens, were upon the same level ; they either appeared in a circle, converging towards the common centre of an eminence that rose above the others, or were seen sloping in flights along the hills that bordered upon the mountains. Rows of lofty sycamores and spreading walnuts marked the lines of the streets and the divisions of the gardens ; and the latter were fenced round with thick mulberry hedges, whose leaves, the Hâkim informed us, fed innumerable silk-worms, the produce of which formed the finest of the silk manufactured at the cities of Cashan and Isfahan.

The sun was shining bright as we gazed upon this enchanting scene, and its beauty was greatly increased by numerous clear streams, which, pouring from the neighbouring hills, either flowed or were conducted among the gardens and orchards, where they appeared lost, till seen glistening through those parts where the foliage was lighter or wholly removed.

The Elchee was quite delighted with the prospect. After remaining for some time abstracted

in contemplating its beauties, he turned round to the governor, and with assumed gravity proposed to change stations with him. "I should," said the old Hajee, with a faint smile, "make a bad Elchee; and the pleasure you have enjoyed in looking at this town from that window is the greatest you would ever know if you were its Hâkim." When making this last observation, he shook his head in a manner too plainly indicating that the scene of abundance with which he was surrounded was to him the source of more trouble than enjoyment.

I mentioned my suspicions to my friend Hajee Hoosein, as he came to me with an evening kelliân. "Ah!" said he, imitating the exclamation of his countrymen on entering the charming vale of Desht-e-Arjun, "Irân hemeen-est! Irân hemeen-est! This is Persia! this is Persia! But God is just, as Sâdee says: he gives fertile fields, roses, and nightingales, with wicked men, to one country, and deserts and screech-owls, with righteous men, to another; and again he tells us, 'It is not the silk-worm but he that wears the silk vest that is to be envied.'"

I was quite satisfied with the meaning and moral of my friend's quotations, though I con-

fess I have looked in vain over the pages of Sâdee to discover them in his volumes. But the Hajee, like many of his countrymen, has such a deference for that inimitable author that he ascribes all sentiments that appear just to him, as the sole source of human wisdom.

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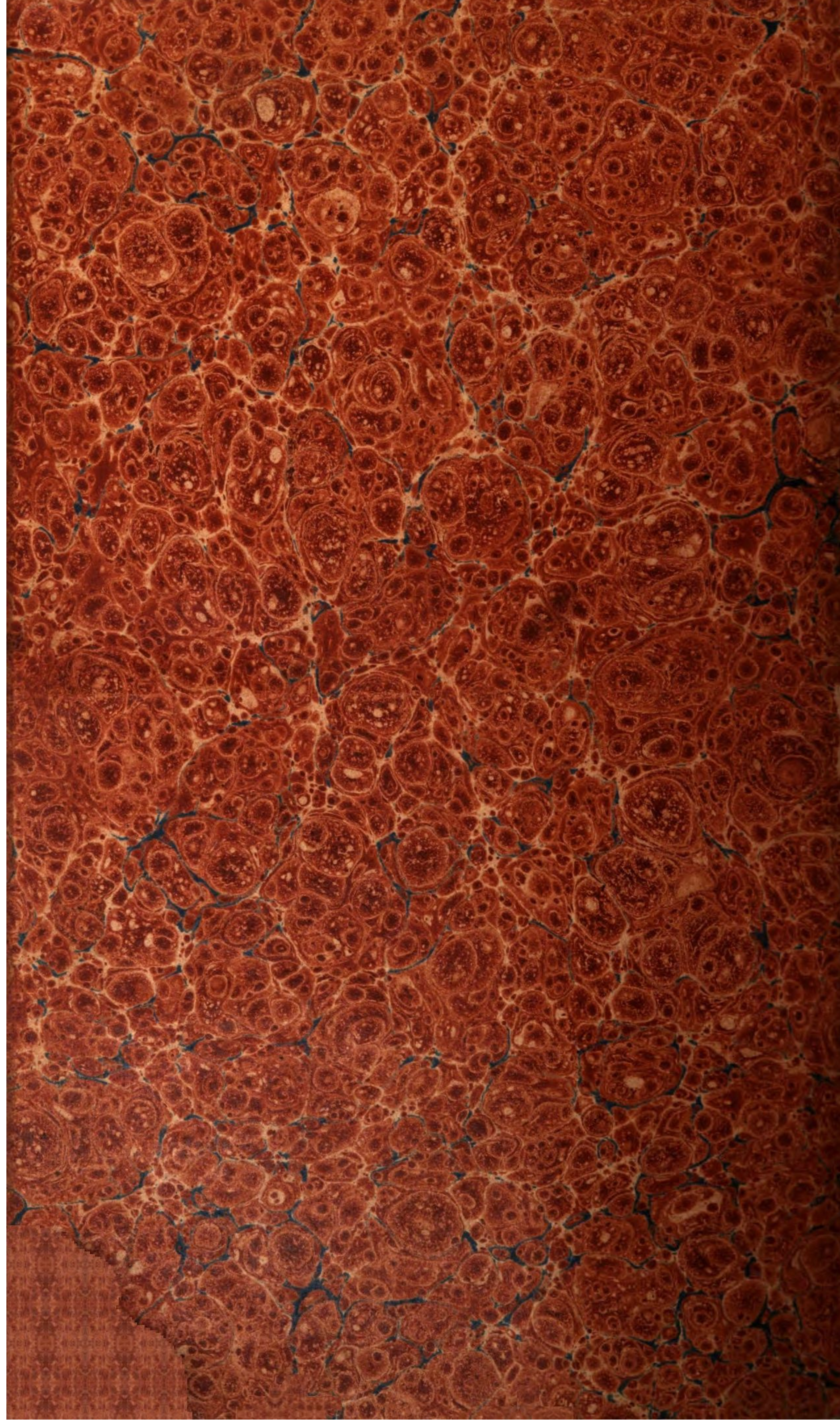
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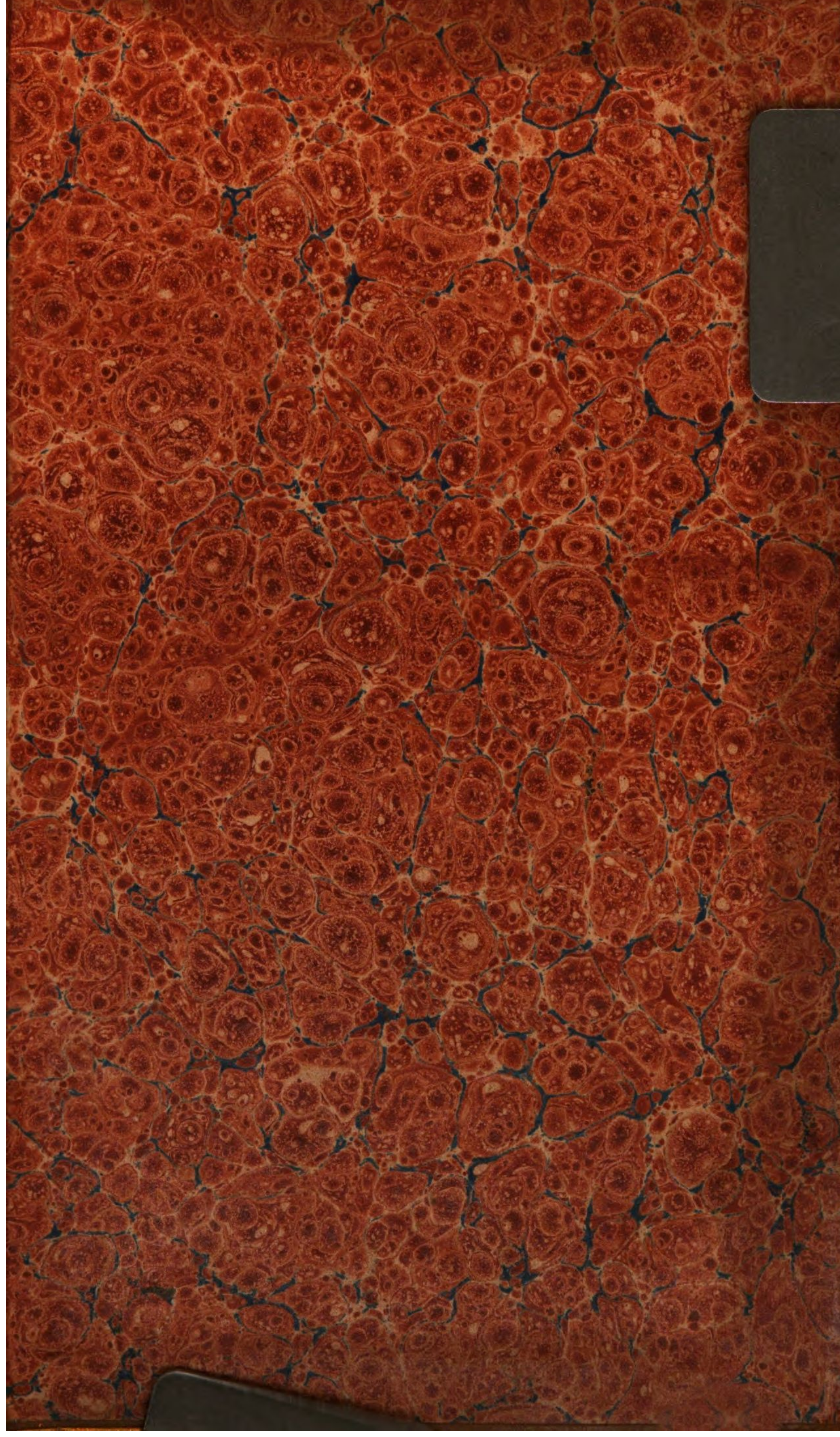
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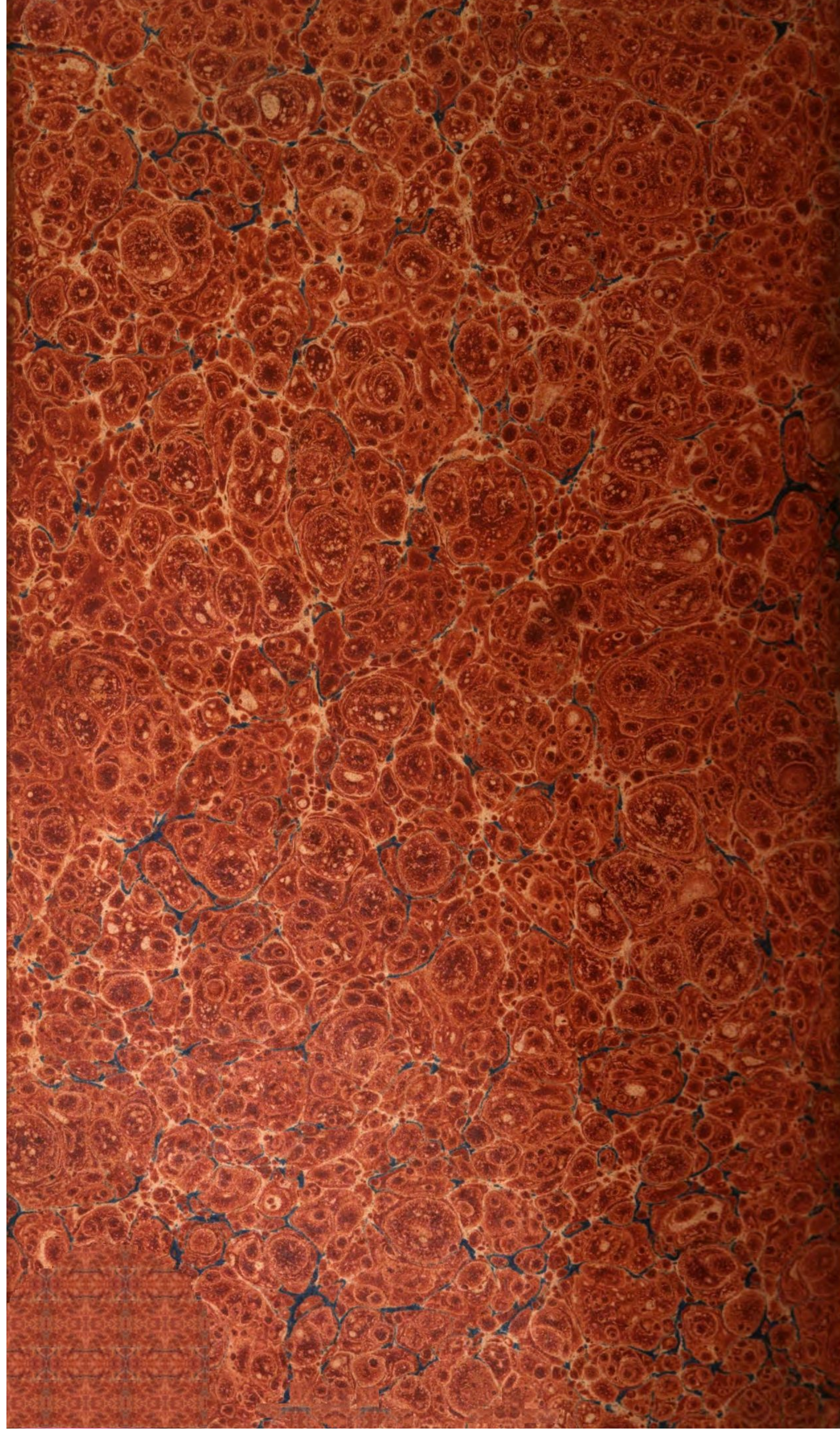
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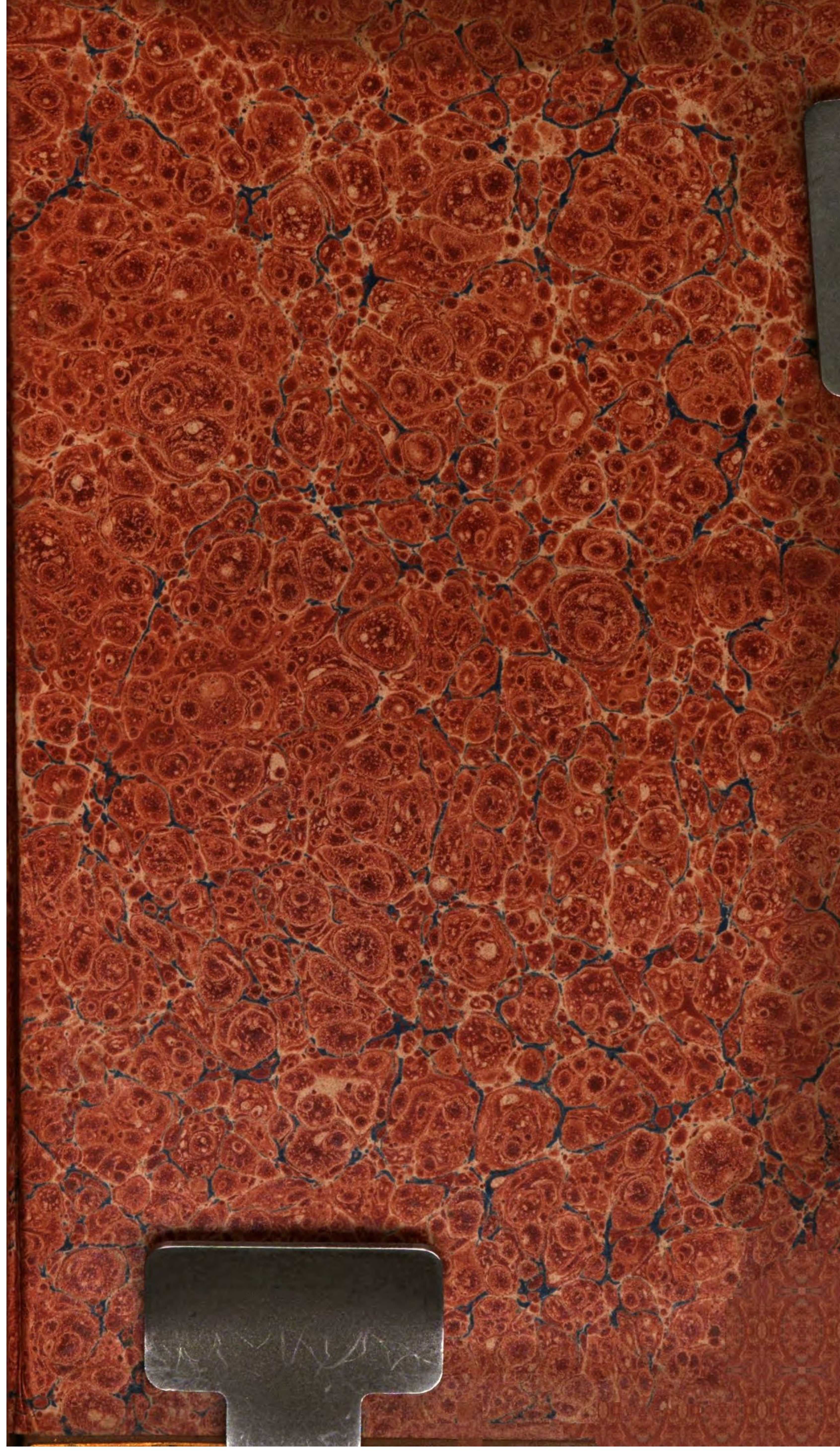
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